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Tulkarm and Jenin Spend Id al-Adha Holiday Under Curfew

Israeli soldiers interrogating two Tulkarm youths while forcing them to lean against a wall./AFP photo

by Khalil Touma

Israeli troops placed the northern West Bank cities of Tulkarm and Jenin under strict round-the-clock curfew August 24 after an Israeli was shot in each city within a five-hour period. The attack, the third of its kind in less than one month, triggered demands for reprisal from governmental circles as well as Israeli settlers.

Andre Aloush of Netanya was fatally wounded at around 10:00 am, moments after he entered a jewellery store in Tulkarm. Israeli Radio reported that the attacker fired a .38 calibre pistol at Aloush from close range, seriously wounding him. The attacker disappeared in the crowd and escaped. Israeli military sources suspect the attacker fled the scene in a pale-coloured Mercedes with Nablus licence plates. Israeli troop reinforcements were summoned to the town. The wounded man was rushed to Tulkarm hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

At about 2:00 pm on the same afternoon, another Israeli, Uri Ovad from Tiberias, was shot and critically wounded in the Jenin market. He too was shot from close range.

Following the two incidents, Israeli troops stormed both cities and rounded up hundreds of residents who were out doing last minute shopping for the Muslim feast of *Id al-Adha*. The soldiers also placed the two cities under curfew and closed all roads with checkposts and barbed wire coils. Meanwhile, Israeli Chief-of-Staff General Moshe Levy visited Jenin to check on security procedures implemented in the wake of the attack.

Later in the day, the military governors of Tulkarm, Jenin and Nablus summoned local notables from the three cities and informed them that they were going to implement harsh measures in the two towns including prolonged curfews and search-and-arrest campaigns among residents. Israeli authorities also launched a massive search campaign in Nablus for the Mercedes which the Tulkarm attacker allegedly used to escape. *The Jerusalem Post* reported that more than 150 Mercedes were gathered in front of the Nablus military headquarters for police inspection. Earlier, the authorities banned residents of Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarm from crossing the bridges to Jordan.

The strict curfew on Jenin and Tulkarm lasted from August 25 to 27. Residents were unable to celebrate the holiest Muslim feast. Traditional family greetings and reunions had to be cancelled. Merchants, who usually stock their shops in advance for the feast, reported heavy losses. One butcher told journalists that he had slaughtered 100 lambs which he intended to sell during the feast. The man said he does not know what to do with the meat now. Sweets, vegetable and fruit shops also reported heavy losses. Hilmi Hanoun, major of Tulkarm, told *Al Fajr* that the authorities refused the municipality's demand that the curfew be lifted from 6:00-9:00 am on Monday morning to allow residents to celebrate the Muslim feast. It was the first time that the feast prayers were not conducted since the occupation began in 1967. According to Hanoun, merchants and farmers in the city lost an estimated JD300,000 because of the curfew. Hanoun stressed his condemnation of all acts of violence against civilians, whether Arabs or Jews. He did not believe, however, that Palestinian organisations were responsible for the killings. "No sane person would do a thing like that at the time of the feast. The killer is still unidentified," he noted.

The Israeli appointed mayor of Jenin, who is known [illegible] for his close ties to the authorities, condemned the attacks in

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Siniora Insists on Int'l Conference

Al Fajr editor Hanna Siniora returned to the occupied territories August 22 without having met with US special envoy Richard Murphy.

Upon his return to his Jerusalem office Siniora, who was among the seven Palestinians chosen by the PLO to represent the Palestinian side in the proposed Palestinian-Jordanian delegation, said that new US conditions were the main reason behind the failure of the Murphy mission. Siniora said that the US, under Israeli pressure, is insisting that direct talks with Israel immediately follow the meeting between the US and the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

The Palestinian journalist explained that the PLO and Jordan insist on the Amman agreement and the resolutions of the Arab League summits. "Jordanian officials including King Hussein explained clearly to Murphy that the only acceptable venue for negotiations is the international conference," said Siniora. Hanna Siniora insists that any settlement to the Middle East conflict must be lasting and comprehensive. "If you want a comprehensive settlement, then you must include Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, the PLO and Israel." Siniora said that all the Arab states including those who boycotted the last Arab summit and Palestinian factions opposed to the mainstream PLO leadership accept the international conference as a reasonable venue for negotiations.

Regarding the controversy over the names of the Palestinian delegation Siniora said that the US is prepared to accept four of the seven delegates but is holding up any such declaration until the process of what goes on after the meeting is approved. In addition to Siniora and Gaza advocate Fayez Abu Rahmeh the Americans are also prepared to meet PNC secretary Mohammad Sbeih and PNC member Nabil Shaath, *Al Fajr* has learned.

Mothers, wives and sisters of recently arrested Beit Sahour residents holding an open sit-in strike at the local church. A total of 37 men have been arrested since the beginning of the month./BA

At Greek Catholic Church

Mothers Protest Brutal Arrests

by Baher Ashhab

Mothers of 37 Beit Sahour youths who were arrested at different times this month told *Al Fajr* that their sons were beaten and then locked up in a most abusive manner. Most were forbidden to see their parents, lawyers or Red Cross representatives. The few who were permitted visits complained of severe physical and mental suffering. The mothers, some with more than one son in detention, have been holding daily sit-in strikes at the Catholic Church in Beit Sahour since August 25 to draw public attention to their ordeal, which they say has left them in despair and agony. They told *Al Fajr* they fear that more members of their families could be arrested and their houses demolished.

The youths, who include a recent amputee and a youth with a history of heart problems, were arrested in similar ways on 10 different occasions between July 29 and August 24. They were mainly high school and college students. Israeli military authorities say the youths are members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and have attacked army vehicles with stones and molotov cocktails. The mothers insist that their sons are innocent. Beit Sahour mayor Hanna Atrash told *Al Fajr* that the youths are victims of the Israeli clampdown on the occupied territories in the wake of an escalation in Palestinian resistance.

According to the mothers, the soldiers, whom they estimated to number over 50 (including border police and intelligence personnel), repeatedly came around midnight, encircled the neighbourhood, directed spotlights on windows and balconies and then forcefully entered the home of the youth targeted for arrest.

While in the house the soldiers would awaken residents and search the house thoroughly, often destroying pieces of furniture in the process. The soldiers would then order the youth to dress, blindfold and handcuff him and take him away.

Several mothers told *Al Fajr* that family members were verbally abused and threatened if they tried to stop the soldiers.

One of the arrested youths has a heart condition. His mother told *Al Fajr* that at 25, he has already suffered two heart attacks. The military authorities have so far refused to tell her where her son is or to take him his prescription drugs.

Another youth had a work accident just two days before his arrest, which resulted in the amputation of two fingers. He was in the Hussein Hospital in Beit Jala when soldiers went to his house. The soldiers arrested his younger brother instead and ordered his family to deliver him promptly. The family did, and his brother was released. His mother fears that he might develop a case of gangrene.

Another youth was to bury his deceased father August 22, but was arrested the day before the funeral. His mother told *Al Fajr* that when he requested the soldiers to wait another 24 hours to arrest him, "they beat him savagely, put a garbage bag over his head and dragged him into the army vehicle."

Al Fajr has learned that most of the youths belonged to a Beit Sahour youth club called Dar Latin. Some were members but had never actually participated in club activities. The military apparently arrested all those who belonged to the club indiscriminately.

When contacted by sources close to *Al Fajr* the military said that the youth "were arrested in a most routine manner." They denied using brutality during the arrest and interrogation procedures.

Bank of Palestine:

'Close Us Down or Leave Us Alone'

Increased harassment of the Gaza's Bank of Palestine by military authorities prompted Bank Director Hashem Shawwa, to cable the Israeli military authorities in the Strip August 22 and demand that they "either close the bank altogether or lift their restrictions on its operation."

Three weeks ago, the Israeli military authorities notified the bank administration of their plans to take them to court on charges of illegally bringing in money from Egypt. The bank's attorney Khamis Asfour told *Al Fajr* that the bank brought 250,000 Egyptian pounds (approximately US 280,000 dollars) nearly one-and-a-half years ago, with government permission. The authorities, however, insist that no permission was given. Asfour said that the Israelis proposed that the bank pay them US 50,000 dollars in an out-of-court settlement. The bank, however, refused. "We will not pay and will challenge the authorities in court if we have to," Asfour said.

"At a time when the whole world denounces racial discrimination, Israeli military authorities in Gaza have kept up their harassment on the bank and its management, hampering its prime function to serve Gaza's Palestinian population," Shawwa said. He sent copies of the cable to the Israeli president, prime minister, defence minister and several military officials in Gaza.

Since it reopened in 1981, the Bank of Palestine, the only operating Arab bank in the occupied territories, has had to deal with several restrictive measures that included a prohibition on issuing new shares, restriction on new branches in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and prohibition on dealing with foreign currencies. Last month the authorities prevented the bank from selling 100,000 new shares in the West Bank and Gaza, without giving any reason. Three major Israeli banks are allowed to operate freely in the occupied territories.

The Bank of Palestine was reopened in 1981 after the Israeli High Court overruled a military decision to ban it. It first opened in 1961 but was closed by the Israeli government in 1967, soon after the occupation of Gaza.

According to the bank's attorney Khamis Asfour, the military restrictions "were designed to give an advantage to Israeli banks and to prevent any improvements in Gaza's economy in general."

"The authorities have restricted our low interest loans to Gaza fruit farmers so that the farmers do not compete with Israeli fruit producers, for example," he said. Gaza farmers who are already forbidden to export their produce to European and American markets, unlike Israeli farmers, now have to turn to Israeli banks to get loans and mortgages. Israeli banks offer loans with 20 percent interest while the Bank of Palestine charges only 13 percent, Asfour told *Al Fajr*.

In his cables to government officials, Shawwa concluded: "Since the authorities are so irritated at the bank's operations, and intend to keep putting obstacles in the way of our development and prosperity, they should come out in the open with their intentions and close the bank altogether. The present situation is totally unacceptable."

Tent Prison Erected in Nablus

The Israeli commander of the Central Region, Amnon Shahak, has ordered a tent prison to be erected on a hilltop opposite the central Nablus Prison to accommodate Arab prisoners, the Hebrew daily *Hadashot* reported August 23. The paper added that the decision was taken because of a dispute between the military commander and the Prison Authority, which refused to accommodate new prisoners in the central Nablus prison for lack of space. Overcrowdedness in the prison reached an unprecedented high last month. The paper said that the Nablus prison administration refused to receive 8 new prisoners who were sentenced in the Nablus military court on political charges last month. A large military force was allocated to guard the new tent prison. In the past, prisoners have repeatedly complained of overcrowdedness.

In a related story, the 400 Palestinian prisoners at Askalan prison are said to be suffering from bad conditions. Advocate Ibrahim Irshaid from the Prisoner's Solidarity Committee recently visited his clients at the prison and told *Al Fajr* that prisoners still have their meals on the floor because no tables are available.

They are also forbidden to use hot water, and the mats they sleep on are worn out. A few months ago the Prison Authority promised to improve the situation, but nothing was done. The Committee, the advocate said, will file a complaint to the Prison Authority to demand improvements.

Israeli Soldiers Shoot Qalqilya Man

Israeli soldiers shot and wounded a Qalqilya resident August 26 after he refused to put up with soldiers' harassment and walked away from them, *Al Fajr* was told.

Fathi Hneineh, 30, his father and two brothers were on their way to a relative's house on Monday afternoon to offer greetings when an eight-man Israeli patrol stopped them and demanded they stand against the wall with their hands raised and legs wide open. The soldiers searched them roughly and made mocking and obscene remarks about them. Fathi became angry and told the soldiers that they had no right to treat them that way. The soldiers laughed at him and pushed him against the wall. Fathi became increasingly angry and walked away from the scene. The soldiers told him to halt and when he did not, they shot several bullets in the air. Fathi, however, did not halt and the soldiers shot directly at him wounding him in the arm and causing him to fall in pain. The soldiers then took Fathi to the nearby Kfar Saba hospital where he underwent emergency surgery. He is now in a satisfactory condition and is expected to be released on August 30.

Fathi's father told *Al Fajr* that he will take legal action against the military authorities in Qalqilya for "allowing their personnel to harass and shoot at innocent people." He said that several city residents told him following the incident they had seen the same patrol soldiers "pushing people around, checking their IDs and verbally abusing them for no reason." They will testify to that in court, he said.

An eyewitness to the incident told *Al Fajr* that moments before the incident he heard the soldiers arguing about who to stop and betting on how they would react. "Most people would not react to their ridicule and harassment because they were holding a gun to their necks."

"I was patient and my two other sons were too, but Fathi is a proud man and cannot take ridicule from anyone," Fathi's father told *Al Fajr*.

City residents had complained to police and military authorities about the soldiers' behaviour in the past but were never listened to, he said. "Now they have hurt a member of my family and they will have to explain that in a court of law."

One day earlier, an Israeli soldier shot and seriously wounded a 16-year-old girl in Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip for no apparent reason. The girl was transferred to an Israeli hospital inside the 'green line' and was listed in a critical condition. The soldier was quoted by *The Jerusalem Post* as saying that "the shots were fired accidentally as I was cleaning my rifle."

It is not clear if the two incidents will be investigated.

A bitter grin on Khalil Abu Zayyad's face when he said goodbye to his father./AFP photo

Abu Ain Not Allowed to Attend Mother's Funeral

The Israeli authorities rejected requests by Palestinian prisoner Ziad Abu Ain to see his dying mother and later to attend her funeral. Abu Ain's mother died August 19.

Ziad Abu Ain, a resident of al-Bireh who has been held since July 31 under administrative detention orders, was refused permission to leave the Ramle prison where he has been locked up in solitary confinement without charges.

Mahmoud Abu Ain, Ziad's older brother, told *Al Fajr* that he contacted Ziad's lawyer as soon as doctors told him that the condition of his mother, who was suffering from complications after a stroke, "was hopeless." "We asked the authorities to give him a few hours to see his mother but they refused," he said.

The Abu Ain drama, however, continued. After her death in the early hours of August 19, Abu Ain's lawyer again called the authorities, this time for permission to attend his mother's funeral. The legal adviser to the military governor told Abu Ain's lawyer, Jonathon Kuttab, that there was a tentative decision to allow Ziad to attend the funeral.

All day the bereaved family waited impatiently for Ziad to come home to take part in the funeral. Repeated phone callers were assured by the Israelis that within 15 minutes Ziad would be released. Finally at 5:30 pm, after waiting all day, the family decided to go ahead with the funeral. According to Islamic faith a body shouldn't be left unburied overnight.

After the burial, Mahmoud Abu Ain was furious. "Why did they give us hope? They could have told us no from the beginning and saved everyone a lot of suffering," he said.

Ziad's lawyer Jonathan Kuttab also complained about the Israeli treatment. "Ziad is not held for any crime, and anyhow what we requested was purely humanitarian."

Kuttab recalled that a member of the Jewish terrorist underground was allowed to leave prison to attend a wedding, another to attend a bar mitzva and all of them were allowed to go swimming once while being taken from court to prison.

Ziad Abu Ain, who was released last May in the exchange agreement between Israel and the Popular Front-General Command, was rearrested July 31 under six month administrative detention orders.

Ziad Abu Ain in happier times; with his mother shortly after being released from prison last May./BA photo

Abu Zayyad Forced to Leave Voluntarily

Khalil Abu Zayyad voluntarily left the West Bank for Amman August 28 after his attorney struck a deal with Israeli authorities to prevent his permanent deportation. The deal, the first one of its kind, was concluded only two days before a High Court hearing scheduled for August 29 and stipulates that Abu Zayyad drop his High Court appeal in exchange for leaving the West Bank for a maximum of three years, during which he can apply for permission to return. The Israeli authorities will then review his case and if they find that he "did not carry out any activities against Israel" they will permit his re-entry, *Al Fajr* has learned. Abu Zayyad was released and given 48 hours to pack his belongings and say goodbye to his family.

Abu Zayyad, 35, was arrested August 8 on allegations of activity with the Fatah Movement and carrying out "subversive activities against the state of Israel."

His release came as a surprise to his wife 'Ula, who only learned of the deal as he entered his Azzariyeh home in late afternoon August 27. 'Ula, who is expecting their first child in October, will accompany her husband to Amman but will return to deliver at home so that "the baby will not be forced into exile as well."

Prior to his release, military authorities warned Abu Zayyad that if he carried out "subversive activities against the state" while in temporary exile they will not permit him to return. He will be staying with relatives in the Jordanian capital until he finds temporary work.

According to Zayyad's attorney Amnon Zichroni, the deal struck with the Israeli authorities will oblige them to allow Abu Zayyad to return. "They signed an agreement that gave Abu Zayyad the right to appeal to any court in Israel in case problems concerning his return arise," he said. Zichroni added that he will attempt to get permission for Abu Zayyad to return before the three years pass. He said that the whole ordeal was to the Israelis a matter of prestige and "keeping face." "They knew they had nothing against him but thought they can use him as a scapegoat in their iron fist policy. We figured they will not let Abu Zayyad go (if the High Court ruled in his favour) and thus lose face, so we suggested a compromise."

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Emile Touma, 66
Palestinians Lose Historian, Idealogue

Veteran communist leader and prominent Palestinian historian Dr Emile Touma of Haifa died in the central hospital of Budapest, Hungary August 27. He died of cancer.

The 66-year-old Israeli Communist Party politbureau member underwent a cancer operation last March in Haifa, but his health deteriorated ever since. Recently he was transferred to Hungary for treatment, where he died.

Touma's untimely death caused much pain and sorrow to all those who knew him. He was known as a faithful fighter for the Palestinian cause, democracy, progress and peace among peoples. He was mourned by his party, the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality which he helped to establish, the Regional Committee of the Arab Local Councils Heads in Israel and by local and national leaders and dignitaries.

The PLO also sent its condolences in an obituary published in *Al Ittihad* Arabic daily. The PLO's official news organ (*Filistin al-Thawra*) also prepared an editorial to be published in its August 31 issue indicating that Touma did not just record history, he participated in making it.

He was born in Haifa 1919 to a wealthy family and received his secondary education in the Mount Zion English school where he began his nationalist activities by participating in nationalist student activities. In 1937 he travelled to England where he joined the faculty of Cambridge University as a law lecturer. There he became acquainted with communist student circles and represented the Arab Students League to the International Student Conference in Paris in April 1939.

He also published a number of books in Arabic, including *The Roots of the Palestinian Problem*, *60 Years on the Pan Arabist Palestinian Movement*, *The American Policy in the Middle East*, *Contemporary Zionism*, *The Path of Arab Masses in Israel* and others.

Touma was also known as a prominent figure in the Committee in Defence of Land. He once wrote, "I have loved my people wholeheartedly and believed deeply in the fraternity of peoples without any reservations."

Touma wrote regularly for *Al Fajr* English weekly in 1981 under the pen name Jaber Thabet.

15 Administratively Detained

Three Palestinians to be Deported

Three Palestinian residents were held for deportation and 15 others were put under administrative detention on alleged accusation of incitement August 29. The act is seen as implementing recent Israeli measures. The three deportees are Amin Ramzi Darwish Maqboul from Nablus, Walid Ahmad Mahmoud Nazzal from Qabatiya in the Jenin district and Bahjat Mustafa Hassan al-Jayousi from Jayous village in the Tulkarm district. 15 Palestinians were also placed under administrative detention orders.

The authorities claim that Amin Maqboul is a central Fatah leader in the Nablus region who coordinates and incites others to undertake "sabotage" operations. Amin was first arrested on March 1970 and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. In May this year he was put under town-arrest in Nablus and was prevented from entering Najah University to continue his studies.

Walid Nazzal, however, was also arrested in 1982 and sentenced to one year in prison for visiting the offices of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine in Damascus. In January this year he was placed under town-arrest in his home-town of Qabatiya. The authorities claim that Walid is a senior activist of the Democratic Front in the Jenin area.

Bahjat Jayousi, a Najah University graduate of 1985, is also an ex-prisoner. He was arrested in 1976 and sentenced to five years imprisonment on charges of membership in the Popular Struggle Front. His house was also demolished, the statement put out by the Israeli army said.

The deportation orders were issued by the Israeli commander of the Central Region (the West Bank) Amnon Shahak and based on the British Emergency Regulations of 1945. The three men are entitled to appeal before a special military Ojections Committee.

Military authorities, on the other hand, declined to mention the names of 15 people who have been placed under town arrest. The total number of town arrestees, after the use of this type of punishment was revived three weeks ago, reached 20. According to the order, each of the administrative detainees was given a six-month arrest order, all by the commander of the Central Region Amnon Shahak.

Israeli Arm Raids
Three Lebanese Villages

Israeli army forces raided three Shi'ite villages outside the "security zone" on Wednesday August 28, ostensibly in response to Katyusha rocket attacks against the Galilee panhandle in Israel at the beginning of the week.

According to a report in *Yediot Aharonot* August 29, the raid was launched in the early hours of the morning when a contingent of between 100-200 soldiers blocked off the roads leading to the villages of Shkara, Majdal Salim and Kabroha. Approximately 60 armoured vehicles then joined the soldiers as they entered the villages. Men from the village were rounded up and soldiers carried out house-to-house searches as army helicopters circled overhead.

A number of people were arrested and taken to Israel when the Israeli forces withdrew from the area at about 2:30 pm the same day. *Ha'aretz* military correspondent Ze'ev Schiff, in a report August 29, claimed that the raid was principally directed against the Hizballah organisation, which the army holds responsible for the katyusha rockets fired at the northern Galilee earlier this week. Schiff wrote that the raids were undertaken in order to warn the Amal movement that Israel would continue to raid southern Lebanon if "order is not established."

The same afternoon a booby-trapped car exploded at an SLA roadblock seven kilometres outside of Jezzine on the Jezzine-Sidon road. The driver of the car, 18-year-old Hassan Kataya, a member of the Lebanese branch of the Syrian Ba'ath party, died in the explosion along with an SLA soldier; two other SLA soldiers were wounded in the blast, an Israeli military spokesperson said.

In another related story, the Israeli army revealed that a group of Palestinian commandos were captured at sea on August 24. According to a last minute story in *Ha'aretz* August 29, they were on their way to the Galilee to stage an attack against Israel. The group members belong to Fatah and told their interrogators that they underwent training in Algeria for a year in preparation for the operation.

Among those captured were two people who are citizens of western countries.

First Convention:

Progressive Movement Supports PLO

Rev. Abu al-Asal (left) during PLP visit with Arafat.

The Progressive Movement called on the Israeli government August 24 to recognise the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people and to start immediate negotiations with its leadership. The Progressive Movement also called upon Israel to end its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

The calls came at the conclusion of its first national convention held in Nazareth between August 22-24. Over 250 regional delegates gathered to discuss the party's covenant and elect a secretary-general. At the convention's conclusion the delegates adopted resolutions in favour of recognition and negotiation with the PLO. They elected Reverend Riah Abu al-Asal from Nazareth as party secretary-general. Abu al-Asal will replace movement co-founder Dr Rashid Salim, also of Nazareth, as leader of the Movement. The delegates also elected a 22 member central committee.

The Progressive Movement, formed a few months before last year's Israeli elections, entered elections on one ticket with the Jewish Alternative Movement, under the name The Progressive List for Peace. They managed to send two of its members, Matti Peled, a Jew, and Mohammad Mi'ari, an Arab, to the Knesset. Last June Mi'ari was deprived of his parliamentary immunity on the pretext that he refused to denounce Palestinian military attacks.

In June last year, the Knesset elections committee outlawed the PLP in an attempt to prevent it from running in the elections. The Israeli High Court overruled the decision.

Reverend Abu al-Asal told *Al Fajr* that the PLP will "continue to struggle for the abolition of racist discrimination and for creating a chance for a better life for Arabs inside the 'green line.'" He also called upon other Arab and progressive factions inside the 'green line' to unite and work together towards "our common goal."

Rabin Threatens Jordan, Syria

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin spelled out Israel's concerns August 22 over the growing military strength of Syria and the setting up of PLO headquarters in Jordan.

Rabin, who is often described as the most hawkish minister in the Labour Party, told graduates of the Israeli army command and staff college that of all Arab countries, Syria is the one that represents an imminent and potential threat. He noted that Syrian threats arise from her efforts to reach strategic parity with Israel. Rabin said that the pullback of Syrian forces from Lebanon, Syria's perception of Israel's economic crisis and the subsequent cuts in Israel's defence budget might lead Syria to take a "miscalculated" step. He said that this threat must be handled with top priority, adding that Israel "is prepared and ready" to counter "the Syrian danger."

In an interview with *The Jerusalem Post* August 23, Rabin further explained that Syria stands alone as an immediate military threat to Israel since Egypt is at "peace" with Israel, and Iraq is tied up with Iran.

Turning to developments in Jordan, Rabin told the Israeli military college graduates that the Jordanian government must be aware of the consequences of allowing the PLO to operate freely in Jordan. "It would be best if Jordan took heed, before matters reached such a state that Israel could not sit idly by in view of what may develop," he warned.

Rabin's remarks were the harshest from a Labour Party minister since the establishment of the "national unity" government in 1984 and came after repeated verbal attacks from Minister-Without-Portfolio Ariel Sharon (Likud) who called on the Israeli government to bomb PLO bases and headquarters in Jordan.

Rabin's remarks about Jordan have been viewed as a clear reply to Palestinian-Jordanian efforts to start political negotiations over the future of the West Bank and Gaza.

Rabin voiced staunch opposition to the convening of an international conference under UN auspices and with the USSR's participation. In his interview with *The Jerusalem Post*, Rabin called on King Hussein to follow in the footsteps of the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who concluded a separate peace agreement with Egypt without the rest of the Arab countries. Sadat was assassinated by an army officer in October 1981 during the eighth anniversary of the October War parade.

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The Bitter Memory

Last Sunday, curfew was imposed on two of the West Bank's largest cities, Tulkarm and Jenin. Unlike curfews in most parts of the world, Israeli military curfews are not restricted to nighttime only, but are enforced round-the clock. Usually after the first 24 hours of total prohibition of movement, the Israeli army grants one or two hours' break in which residents are allowed to to obtain essential food supplies, if they are fortunate enough to live near shops with food supplies available.

This latest curfew was enforced on the eve of Islam's holiest feast *Id al-Adha* (the feast of sacrifice). Muslims who travel to Mecca for the pilgrimage ritual (Haj) spend this night at Mount Arafat, awaiting the dawn when sacrifices are given to atone for sins. In the Islamic world Muslims spend the night before the *Id* preparing for the feast. Lambs are bought and readied for sacrifice, new clothes are purchased and a festive atmosphere prevails past midnight as everyone stocks up for the four-day holiday during which all shops are closed.

The curfew on Tulkarm and Jenin brought all this holiday activity to an ugly halt. Not only were families unable to buy holiday sweets and kill the sacrificial lamb (one butcher was stuck with 100 sheep), but the most important part of the *Id* – family reunions – couldn't take place. Brothers visiting their sisters, children visiting their parents, people returning from work in Jordan or the Gulf for an annual holiday visit with their families, all were not allowed to reach their homes.

These special moments that are eagerly awaited all year were not to be. Instead, families were stuck in their homes and children had to make do without new toys or the much anticipated annual cash gifts from their uncles. Why? Because an Israeli was shot while travelling in their town. Children don't understand this. All they understand is that the cherished holiday has been tampered with. Instead of laughing and enjoying themselves, their sharp disappointment leads to anger and irritability, making them unbearable to their parents. Deep down a new seed of hatred grows for the soldiers who are not allowing them to visit and be visited.

This Israeli holiday gift to Palestinian children will certainly leave its impact. Sooner or later, when these children grow into adults, the experience and its impact will be translated into something more concrete than a bitter memory. Do the Israeli military establishment and government take this into account when they give the orders for such collective punishment?

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A Killer's Just Dessert ?

by Daoud Kuttab

At the insistence of Israel's Attorney-General Zamir, an Israeli military court presided over by one judge convened to determine if an Israeli army officer had used "excessive force" with two captured Palestinian commandos. The two were taken alive, but their bodies were later turned over to their families.

The case involves four Palestinians from the Gaza Strip who hijacked an Israeli bus, attempting to steer it across the Israeli-Egyptian border last year. Israeli soldiers managed to stop the bus and killed two Palestinians in their attempt to free the Israeli hostages. The other two Palestinians, however, were taken from the bus alive. They were led away by foot within sight of a number of Israeli and foreign journalists. One Israeli journalist, Alex Libac of *Hadashot* newspaper, succeeded in getting a clear photograph of one of the captured hijackers being escorted away from the scene by two Israeli officers.

Israel Radio in a broadcast announcement said on the 6:30 am news report that "two terrorists were killed and two others were captured." Within an hour, however, the news broadcast quoted a military spokesperson as saying that four of the Palestinians had been killed in the army's storming of the bus.

With the publication of Alex Libac's photos in Israel, and later in *The New York Times*, the Israeli army was forced to respond. An investigation team headed by General Zorea was convened and turned over its findings to the Israeli Attorney-General. The Attorney-General instead of establishing some kind of independent tribunal to try the officer responsible for the indiscriminate killing chose to ask the army to try the head of the paratroopers division in charge of the operation, Yitzhak Mordechai.

In accordance with Israeli army regulations, a military court led by one judge was convened. After the judge reviewed the investigation's findings, he moved to acquit Mordechai from any charges of excessive force. According to the judgment, Mordechai was acting within the scope of his responsibility in handling the bus hijacking.

Who Did It?

If Mordechai is innocent of killing the Abu Juma' cousins, then who is guilty? The various investigations and the military trial have not changed the basic facts involved. The explanations presented in public quote medical pathologists as saying that the "terrorists died as a result of hard blows to the head by the butt of a rifle." And according to the investigation, Mordechai used his personal pistol when he questioned the Palestinian guerrillas. Therefore, the logical explanation derived from the verdict is that either the Juma' cousins were struck on the head by a rifle during the storming operation and somehow managed to walk out of the bus after which they collapsed and died, or that they were killed in cold blood while under interrogation after being taken out alive.

One justification often given for the force used is that the Israeli interrogators were trying to obtain vital information necessary to preserve the lives of those still in the bus and surrounding it. But the facts of the case show clearly that the Palestinians who hijacked the Israeli bus possessed no weapons at all. They had succeeded in hijacking the bus armed with only a shampoo bottle they claimed was a molotov cocktail. This information was discovered by the Israeli army sharpshooters who were the first to get to the bus after the storming operation. Journalists who were near the bus also attest to the fact that no danger whatsoever continued to be posed after the rescue of the bus and the arrest of the bus hijackers. The simple fact that the Palestinians had been riding an Israeli bus that left from Tel Aviv's central bus station makes it impossible to believe that they could have wired the bus with explosives before it took off for its destination.

The trial carried out by a military judge gave little chance for an independent decision. How could an army officer convict a colleague just a few ranks lower than himself? Such a conviction would be a conviction of the Israeli army and its methods more than a conviction of Brigadier General Mordechai.

It is also quite clear that even if Brigadier General Mordechai was convicted he would not have spent any serious time in prison. During the Israeli invasion of south Lebanon in 1978 – the Litani operation – an Israeli army officer, Pinto, shot four Palestinian prisoners in the back. After Pinto's trial and conviction, he was sent to prison but was released four months later when the Israeli army chief-of-staff issued him a pardon. Today, the Israeli officer Mordechai has not only escaped justice but will most certainly be promoted to the position of General. If this is the level of the army's top brass what can one expect from the low-ranking soldiers?

The case of the Gaza bus hijacking opens up a whole new avenue which has long been denied. Palestinians have often accused Israeli prison authorities and interrogators of causing the death of scores of Palestinian prisoners. Although no one has been convicted, an investigation took place this time because a journalist was lucky enough to snap an embarrassing photo. How many other cases of killing captured prisoners have gone unnoticed with no photographers or witnesses around???

AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

Israeli Peace Means More Conflicts in the Middle East

by Maher Abukhater

No matter what is said about Israel being a peace loving underdog in a sea of hostile Arab countries, it so far has caused more trouble in these countries and in the region than it has solved. One would expect that Israel, which claims to need a strong deterrent force because it cannot afford to lose one war, would be the one seeking peace and stability in the Middle East.

The opposite, however, is true. Israel, in the belief that keeping the Arabs divided prevents them from building a force to reckon with in this region, has intervened in one way or another in neighbouring Arab countries and began more conflicts there to a point that the whole region has been destabilised.

After turning Lebanon into rubble and inflaming the civil war there by inciting hostilities between the various ethnic groups to the point of no return, Israel is now turning to Jordan. Before 1970, Israel poured its war machinery into Jordan until that country was ignited by brutal fighting between the Jordanians and Palestinians which left thousands dead and a lasting black mark in Palestinian-Jordanian relations. Now Israeli officials are starting a new propaganda war aimed at the reconciled Palestinian-Jordanian relations hoping to renew the feud between them after both have worked hard for reconciliation.

Israel is responding to Jordanian peace overtures with threats against its territorial integrity and sovereignty as an independent nation. Strangely enough, these threats are eminating from the so-called liberal Labour Party rather than right-wing Israelis.

When Shimon Peres took over the premiership in Israel last year as a Labour representative, Jordan rushed its version of the peace process believing there could be peace reached with a Labour-dominated government. Jordan knew then that Peres had only two years in office according to his national unity agreement with the Likud. It therefore intensified its efforts by putting pressure on PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat to come up with a formula pleasant to the US and the Western world for starting peace negotiations with Israel. Jordan, and Arafat, risked antagonising extremist Arab regimes and Palestinian groups for the sake of getting some kind of momentum going in a peace process for this region.

Instead of reciprocating, Israeli officials increased their rhetoric against Jordan accusing it of becoming a base for Palestinian guerrillas and therefore a threat to Israel. This propaganda war reached a peak when US Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, Richard Murphy, was in the Middle East. Murphy came to the area with high Jordanian and Palestinian expectations that he was going to meet with a proposed Jordanian-Palestinian delegation in a first stage towards a comprehensive peace settlement.

Israel has, from the beginning, opposed such a meeting and done its best to sabotage it. What Israel wants is direct negotiations with Jordan, but without Palestinian representation other than a few token individuals it selects. The irony in Israel's peace proposal with Jordan is that it is not willing to return to Arab hands most, if not all, of the occupied West Bank. What Israel wants to sign with Jordan is a peace treaty in return only for peace, not territorial concessions.

The return of PLO offices to Jordan does in no way constitute a return of armed guerrillas. Israel knows this very well and knows too of the violent history between Palestinians and Jordanians. It knows that a non-written peace with Jordan has been in existence since 1970 when Jordan forced the Palestinian guerrillas out of the country. To the admission of Israeli officials, the Jordanian front has been the most secure for many years, probably more than Israel's own sea and air ports.

There is no doubt then that Israel's real intention from the timing of this fierce propaganda war is to create a wedge between Palestinian-Jordanian relations and sabotage a possible meeting between the Arab team and the Americans. Israel wants to eliminate any Palestinian participation in possible future peace talks at any price even at the cost of its own image abroad. By charging that increased resistance activities inside the occupied territories are inspired and incited by PLO presence in Jordan, Israel is putting pressure on Jordan to limit the physical presence and mobility of the Palestinian organisation on its territory. If Jordan succumbs to Israeli pressure, Palestinian reaction will be particularly unpleasant since the Palestinians who believe in the joint peace formula expect that both sides will stick to their part of the agreement and be willing to fight for it. At the same time, pressure from Palestinian extremists on Arafat to sever relations with the Jordanian regime will find fertile ground in the Jordanian reaction and may win the battle for leadership in the Palestinian movement. All this would mean that Israel's tactics have worked and Arab division continues.

One certain outcome of this Israeli tactic, however, is that the threat of a war breaking out will continue and Arab-Israeli hostility will continue to take its toll on innocent civilians.

It is regretful that Israel feels it can have peace without legitimate Palestinian presence in the process. It should have learned from its experience with Egypt that unilateral peace agreements with neighbouring Arab countries are not guaranteed enough for a lasting peace. The Lebanon war is a prime example of that. Israel may be able to pressure the PLO rank and file out of Jordan or even out of Tunisia, as it has done in Lebanon. But can it pursue it out of the hearts and minds of the individual Palestinians everywhere? ■

Maher Abukhater is a member of the Al Fajr editorial staff.

Palestinians in OT's Live Under Emergency Laws, Too

Since the South African government declared a state of emergency July 21 in 36 districts, the world has reacted by taking concrete economic and political steps to express its disapproval. The UN Security Council voted unanimously July 27 in favour of recommending voluntary economic sanctions against South Africa, and called for the dismantling of apartheid. Canada recalled its ambassador from Pretoria and threatened to take further measures if apartheid was not modified soon. Australia closed down its trade mission in Johannesburg, banned the import of gold Krugerrands, and ended export assistance for Australian companies trading with South Africa. India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi called for a global boycott of South Africa. The EEC 10 recalled their foreign ministers from Pretoria *en masse* for consultations, and decided to send a delegation to South Africa at the end of August to discuss the new state of emergency.

Even the usually recalcitrant US, one of South Africa's only remaining friends, repeatedly condemned the state of emergency through its State Department spokesperson and National Security adviser Robert McFarlane. The Senate seems all but sure to approve initial economic sanctions already passed by a 380-48 vote in the House last July when Congress reconvenes in September. These sanctions include banning new US bank loans to South Africa, banning export of computers and nuclear technology, and a warning that all US investment in South Africa will be discontinued if the government does not take serious steps to dismantle apartheid in 18 months.

The world's reaction has been truly heartwarming. Who said that international public opinion didn't matter and could no longer take effective steps against individual governments?

Yet one puzzling fact remains: The world has rapidly moved to put pressure on one government for enacting a state of emergency that has lasted for a month, yet remains relatively unmoved by another state of emergency that has been in effect for 18 years — that in the West Bank and Gaza.

The powers the South African government granted to police under the 1953 Public Security Act have, without exception, been exercised by the Israeli military administrators in the West Bank and Gaza since 1967. The comparison yields two pictures very similiar to one another. Under the new South African laws, any suspect can be arrested, detained and interrogated for up to 14 days without lawyers or charges. In the West Bank and Gaza, under the 1945 British Emergency Regulations, any Palestinian suspect can be held up to 18 days without charges and without access to a lawyer.

The Israeli government's recent decision to revive the "administrative detentions" means that suspects can now be held indefinitely without trial, access to a lawyer, or any charges whatsoever. Far worse is the government's recent decision to reinstate deportations of residents of the occupied territories without trial.

The new emergency laws in South Africa allow the government to impose curfews and give security forces the freedom to seal off curfew areas, an option the military governors of the West Bank and Gaza also enjoy and exercise quite frequently as a means of collective punishment. The South African government will now also be able to tighten censorship of the news media. All Palestinian newspapers in the occupied territories are subject to military censorship.

The South African security forces are empowered under the new laws to close down businesses suspected of promoting anti-white boycotts. The Israeli army, too, can close any Arab shop or business in the occupied territories on "security" grounds, as it did last April when 23 stores in al-Bireh's market were shut for two months as a punishment for not being able to provide police with a description of the person who killed a Jewish settler in the immediate vicinity.

President Botha has also forbidden outdoor funerals — the only legal way blacks were able to hold mass rallies — for anyone who dies of "unnatural causes." For Palestinians in the occupied territories, this measure has an all-too-familiar ring. The Israelis have long imposed severe restrictions on funerals of slain Palestinians, forcing families to hold them in the middle of the night and limiting attendance to only a handful of immediate relatives.

Residents of the occupied territories have been living under a "state of emergency" for 18 years, yet few countries outside the Arab world have seen fit to protest, let alone impose economic sanctions on the government of Israel. The question that inevitably arises from such a comparison is, why has the world remained silent? It seems that some peoples are more worthy of international indignation than others or perhaps it requires massive, violent resistance ala South Africa to draw the world's attention to the plight of an oppressed people.

State-imposed discrimination against, and military control over, any group, whether on the grounds of race, religion, sex, or any arbitrary characteristic, contravenes the UN Declaration of Human Rights. The international community is therefore morally and legally obligated to stand up to countries that promote any such discrimination. The world has shown that it can stand up to South Africa. Can it do the same to Israel? ■

Name withheld at author's request.

Private Education in East Jerusalem

by Awad Abdel Fattah

A student explains his drawing at an exhibit at St. George's School in Jerusalem.

In Arab East Jerusalem a large network of private and government schools provides education for more than 40,000 students from the city and surrounding areas. Characteristic of East Jerusalem education is the large variety of schools and the special conditions under which they must operate because of the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem. East Jerusalem and West Bank government schools were connected to the Jordanian Ministry of Education before 1967, but came then under the control of the Israeli Ministry of Education and the West Jerusalem municipality. Private schools in Palestine, many of which are in Jerusalem, enjoy almost complete independence, however, with regard to administration and teaching planning. It is largely because of this independence that the tables have turned in Jerusalem: whereas before 1967 the majority of students learned in government schools, today more than 50 percent of East Jerusalem students study in private schools. This high concentration of students in private education, something unique to this area, has shifted the focus of education away from an imposed Israeli curriculum — as in the remaining government schools — to the varying picture of private education institutions.

Missionary Schools

Private schools in East Jerusalem have a long history and some are among the most prestigious institutions in the whole of Palestine and the Middle East. The better known schools are termed "missionary" institutions because their original mission was to spread Christianity in the Middle East. With time they have become purely academic in their desire to provide Palestinian students with the best education possible. Such private "missionary" schools, like St. George's Anglican School (known locally as the *Motran*) and Terra Sancta School, were established more than two centuries ago.

All East Jerusalem schools — including the government schools which refused in 1980 the imposition of an Israeli curriculum (see previous story, *Al Fajr* August 9), follow the Jordanian curriculum. This includes a certain number of required courses in math, geography, Arab history, biology, physics, religion, Arabic language and literature, and English. The Jordanian curriculum culminates in the 12th year with a matriculation examination (known as the *tawjihi*) which is necessary for acceptance in any institution of higher learning. In addition to the Jordanian programme, private schools follow their own mixture of foreign languages and religious subjects, depending on their origin. For example, students studying at St. George's are taught English and Arabic, while students at the Freres' school also learn in French. According to Taher al-Nammari, a veteran teacher and a lecturer at Bethlehem University, there is a committee consisting of the principals of the private schools whose task it is to coordinate educational affairs among the schools. But one private school principal told *Al Fajr* the committee has not been active for the last few years and that now each school arranges its affairs independently of the committee and other schools.

Most of East Jerusalem's private schools are located inside the walls of the Old City. A large number of them operate in old houses which they rent and transform to fit the atmosphere and needs of a school. Overcrowdedness is a problem, with an average of 45 students in each class.

The situation of the government schools is not much different from that of these private schools, however. Except for a few government school buildings which are well-equipped, such as al-Rashidiyya, the rest have not been expanded since the 1967 Israeli occupation. Palestinian Mithqal Natour, head of the education department in the West Jerusalem municipality, admits the severe shortage of rooms in East Jerusalem government schools, but claims that the conditions have improved since 1967 in comparison to before the occupation. Natour also admits Jewish schools in West Jerusalem are much better equipped with all the basic needs as well as sports facilities, developed teaching aids, air conditioning and heating. Natour indicated he faces difficulties with his Israeli superiors when he attempts to get the needed improvements in the Palestinian schools in East Jerusalem. Palestinian educators in Jerusalem reject outright his claims about the improvement of the schools since 1967. Mahmoud Hidbi, a teacher, told *Al Fajr* that overcrowded classrooms are much more problematic than the lack of basic equipment.

Not only are the government schools facing overcrowdedness but because of the dramatic numbers of new students who flocked to private schools after the 1967 war, the private schools face an equal problem of space for which there is no current solution.

Despite the overcrowded conditions, many of the "missionary" schools enjoy a reputation for being the best equipped. These schools belong to various Christian denominations including Anglican, Roman Catholic, Armenian, Coptic, Lutheran and Armenian. Most of these schools were established during the Ottoman Empire rule by foreign missionary groups or foreign churches, and the rest came to Palestine during the British mandate. These schools, numbering 14 elementary, junior high and secondary schools, accept both Christian and Muslim students, except for the Armenian school which is restricted to Armenian students. The tuition fees in most of these schools are comparatively high, and therefore the majority of students come from middle and upper class families. "Rich people" said al-Nammari, "prefer to send their sons and daughters to these schools because of the high level of teaching." The tuition fees for such schools range between JD130-149 (US 325-485 dollars) a year.

Ibrahimyeh College elementary students receive special care in education. Music lessons are given by an experienced music teacher.

Many of these older private schools are still located in their original buildings. Though old, they are still considered better than most of the other facilities. However some of these schools, like many other private institutions, have applied for a construction permit from the Israeli authorities to add other buildings, but they have yet to receive an answer.

Some of the "missionary" schools are in the process of freeing themselves from their foreign administrators. St. George's Anglican School, for example, received its independence in 1976, after it had been administered and financed by the Anglican Church through the assistance of a British bishop. Martin Luther School inside the Old City received its independence from the Lutheran Church in 1979. Samih Abu Leil, acting principal of Martin Luther, told *Al Fajr* that the foreign bishop was replaced by a Palestinian, but the school is still financed by mainly the German church and other foreign churches. They also finance themselves through annual tuition fees.

St. George's Anglican School stopped receiving financial support from the Anglican Church soon after gaining independence. The Church said it did not have the money. Attiyeh Masarweh, principal of the school, told *Al Fajr* that St. George's has become self-supporting which meant, of course, a raise in tuition fees. Some local educators believe the level of education at the *Motran* school has gone down since its British administration was replaced by Palestinians. Masarweh disagreed and said that the increased financial burden has not affected the level of teaching. But he admitted that it has limited their capability to expand. Masarweh told *Al Fajr* that, in recent years, 85 percent of the graduates of the *Motran*, which totals 750 students, have gone on to higher education in various universities. He said the school was considered good partly because of their strictness about choosing good teachers.

Charitable Institutions

In addition to the "missionary" schools, there are 12 private schools in Jerusalem established by individuals or charitable societies. Some of these date back to the British Mandate in Palestine. Education in most of these schools is free, though some charge a nominal, primarily symbolic tuition. These schools are financed by foreign societies and by donations from individuals or institutions in the Gulf states.

The most famous of these schools are Dar al-Tifl (Home of the Children) which is also an orphanage for girls, and Dar al-Awlad (Home of the Boys), a boy's orphanage. Both schools began immediately after the Palestinian tragedy in 1948, when many children were orphaned or the livelihood of their parents stripped away. They later became two of the leading private schools in Jerusalem. Dar al-Tifl for girls has been developed into a large educational institution including a college.

At Dar al-Awlad, an elementary school and junior high for boys, there is an internal section in which 60 Palestinian orphans and some sons of Palestinian detainees live. This is in addition to the 340 other day students. Abdullah Akkawi, principal of the school, told *Al Fajr* that they have been trying since

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Terms of Fraud:

West Bank Land Taken Illegally

by Baher Ashhab

Mahmoud Karim from Jinsafut village. One of the many landowners who lost their lands through fraudulent Israeli deals./BA photo.

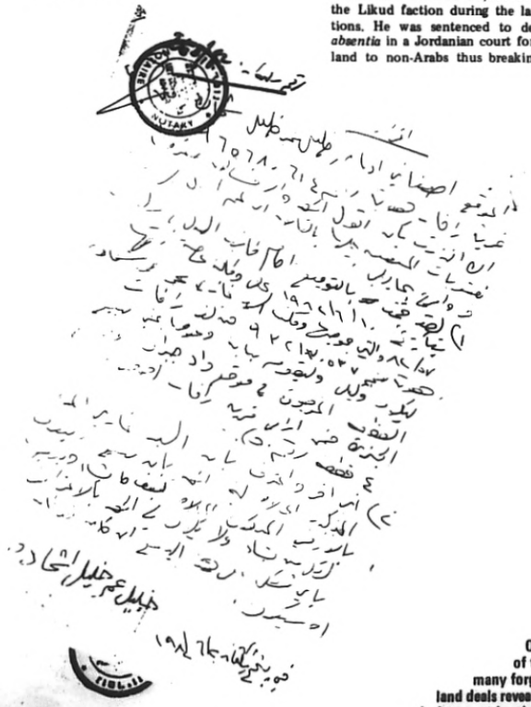
On April 13, 1983, the Israeli government motion picture censor committee forbade public screening of a short feature film written by left-wing journalist Amnon Denkner entitled *The Night When the King Was Born*.

The movie, later screened in private political seminars in Jerusalem, dealt with the politically sensitive subject of land disputes in the West Bank. It told the story of two Israeli military officers from within the military infrastructure in the West Bank who, out of greed, trespassed onto Arab lands, defrauded Arab farmers and stripped them of vast amounts of land.

One scene, which was reported to have enraged Israeli censors the most, depicted the two officials assaulting Arab farmers and forcing them at gunpoint to sign documents that deprived them of their legal properties. The movie also hinted that the military establishment as well as the Israeli government had recently backed the two officials.

With four members opposing, the ten-member committee voted to ban the movie because "it jeopardises the image of Israeli military presence in the administered areas and may serve to incite the residents of these areas," according to a quotation found in *Al Fajr* the next day.

Two years and four months later, this August, a major land fraud scandal with amazing similarities to the movie plot was uncovered. This time it was for real and it threatened not only to surpass government censorship attempts but to implicate many government officials in illegal wrongdoings. Public knowledge of the scandal has so far deeply embarrassed the government and caused several high-ranking officials, thought to be personally involved, to run for cover. Palestinian landowners and lawyers, on the other hand, are happily observing the fiasco, perhaps with the slight hope that their right to West Bank lands might be redeemed.



One of the many forged land deals revealed during court hearings.

The Scandal

The land scandal was made public August 6 when police arrested three Israeli men suspected of forging documents related to illegal purchases of thousands of dunums of Arab lands in the West Bank. The men, it was later discovered, were well-known personalities with extensive military and government connections. They were Yehoshua Mizrachi, ex-military governor of Arab Tulkarm; Michael Oren, a high-ranking police officer also in Tulkarm; and Avraham Salim, an active real estate agent. These three were accused of being paid over US 2,000,000 dollars to buy West Bank lands they had promised but could not deliver.

In a raid on Salim's apartment, the police discovered hundreds of documents, including power of attorney statements, land registrar deeds and forged land purchase receipts all dealing with West Bank lands. They found dozens of legal files that were thought to have burned along with thousands of others in the infamous Nablus court fire in December of last year. Tools used for forging signatures were also found.

Several days later, the police arrested an Arab resident of the village of Hiblah near Nablus. The man, Ahmad Odeh Irar, is notorious for having built a huge, fortress-like home in the village while working as a low-paid clerk at the Salfit Land Registrar Office. Irar quit his job after being convicted of bribery and sentenced to six months in prison in 1979. Irar spent only a few days in prison, however, and soon began to deal illegally with land in his village and in other areas, with his main customers being Israeli real estate companies. Within a few years, he had become one of the wealthiest men in the West Bank and was reputed to have hosted high-ranking government officials, especially from the Likud faction, at his home on several occasions. He is reputed to have contributed over US 30,000 dollars to the Likud faction during the last elections. He was sentenced to death in *absentia* in a Jordanian court for selling land to non-Arabs thus breaking long-standing Jordanian laws.

Upon their arrests, the three Israelis and the Arab land broker (or *simsar*) declared that they had been working on behalf of top government officials. Without mentioning names the suspects said they had information that could bring down the Israeli coalition government, thus hinting that these top officials are in fact within the ranks of the current government.

Arab legal experts familiar with the case told *Al Fajr* that these top officials might well be three ministers from the Likud in the "national unity" government. Several of their aides and deputies are also suspected to be involved, according to the law experts. These three officials are remembered for their staunch support, during the past Likud government, for reducing the government monopoly on West Bank land deals and allowing private investors to speculate. The three had close relationships with the three suspects and other land dealers known by Arabs to have acquired large Arab amounts of land by means of fraud and threats. One such land dealer is Moshe Zar of Kamei Shomron near Qalqilya, *Al Fajr* has learned.

On August 21, left-wing MK Yossi Sarid handed a file to the Israeli Attorney-General in which he implicated several second-rank government officials, public notaries and land dealers whom he said were involved in land deals that were "rooted in forgery, deceit, pressures and threats." He did not say from where he obtained his information. Among those Sarid implicated were former deputy to Sharon when he was Agriculture minister, MK Michael Dekel and his assistant Avi Tzur; former director of the Israeli Land's Administration Ya'akov Aknin; real estate agents Moshe Gindi and Moshe Zar; World Zionist Organisation middleman and new American immigrant Moshe Slonim; and several unidentified lawyers. He also implicated two Israeli real estate companies, Jumbo and Gal Samaria.

Threats to reveal the names of top officials made by the suspects sent shock waves through the Likud where politicians promptly either disassociated themselves with the ordeal or tried to soften its effect on the public. One official, Jacob Fankin, who heads the Israeli Land Administration has already resigned. Likud leader and current Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir warned Israelis not to take the matter too seriously. "Do not touch the issue of land redemption," he said August 19 "Sometimes tricks and schemes were needed and unconventional means used to purchase and redeem land. It is intolerable that the investigation of isolated cases of land purchases should turn into a general witch-hunt on all land purchases in Judea and Samaria, with the aim of preventing the Zionist mission."

The isolated cases of land purchases that Shamir was referring to which triggered the police investigation were those in which dozens of Israeli citizens were adversely affected. Over US 2,000,000 dollars paid to land dealers for the purpose of settling on the West Bank were lost because the lands thought to have been bought with the money, were either not designated as settlement lands or were defrauded from their Arab owners. The "witch-hunt on all land purchases in Judea and Samaria" is in reference to the thousands of legal complaints by Arab landowners against Israeli land dealers which have been flooding West Bank courts ever since the Likud came to power in 1977. They have yet to be resolved. These complaints, each deserving a serious police investigation, concern over 100,000 dunums taken from their owners by means of fraud, violent threats and outright expropriation.

Early in 1983, the Israeli State Comptroller Yitzhak Tunik sent an investigative report to the Likud government in which he said there was evidence to implicate several Israeli real estate companies and land dealers in major illegal land deals in the occupied territories, and urged the government to study the matter. The report was apparently shelved and its contents kept secret. It reappeared only last week, thus further embarrassing and implicating Likud members.

According to Israeli media reports, the comptroller told the Likud government that some 80 percent of land purchases by Israelis in the West Bank examined by the comptroller were acquired "irregularly." Arab legal experts assert that at least 100,000 dunums are involved, of which about 2.5 percent were voluntarily sold by their Arab owners. The real amount, however, might be much more because several landowners whose lands were lost to Israelis are not willing to report their ordeals for fear of settler violence, *Al Fajr* has learned.

Furthermore, some percentage of the 2.7 million dunums (52 percent of all West Bank land) that the Israeli government acquired in the name of "security" was in fact privately owned. The Arab owners could not prove their legal ownership because of the complex land registration laws that date back to Ottoman rule. These lands apparently will not be included in the police investigation as lands acquired "irregularly."

How It All Started

During consecutive labour governments in the first 10 years of occupation, Israeli policy makers followed roughly the Allon Plan concerning the Jewish settlement drive in the West Bank. The plan gave primacy to security considerations with settlements built in strategic areas for the purpose of military defence. Jordanian ordinance No. 25 made it illegal for non-Arabs to purchase land in the West Bank. Yet the Labour governments were subject to pressure from the Likud, Gush Emunim and other elements, who viewed the West Bank as part of the historical-religious land of Israel. The map of the 27 settlements which were built between 1967 and 1977 reflects these considerations. Seventeen were built in the Jordan Valley and near the Dead Sea, and five in the Gush Etzion area, as stipulated by the Allon Plan. One was built in the Latrun region to be included within the Rogers Plan of minor territorial adjustments. The remaining three, and most notably Kiryat Arba near Hebron, were located in heavily populated areas of the West Bank as a result of right-wing pressure.

At the end of 1977, a few months after the Likud came to power, the new government altered the Labour policy and approved the establishment of Jewish settlements in all parts of the West Bank. In 1978 it was decided that settlements should be built on confiscated "state" land. A year later ordinance No. 25 was abolished and Jews were "permitted" to buy private land as well.

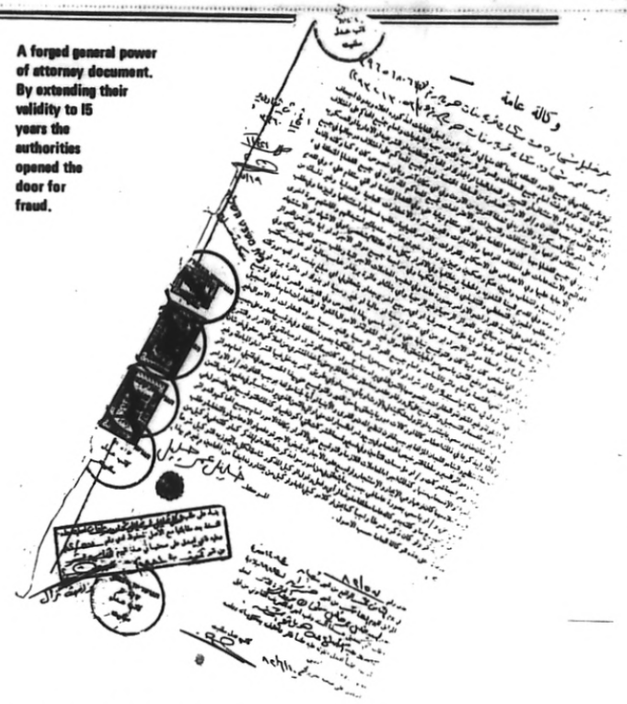
Following the policy change, several government departments were charged with preparing a comprehensive survey of state and private lands in the West Bank. After the survey was done such an incredible settlement drive was initiated that within four years over 1.7 million dunums were confiscated and designated as state land. An additional 400,000 were declared closed areas for security reasons, and 157 settlements were constructed. The Ministry of Agriculture, then headed by Arik Sharon, submitted in 1982 a plan which called for 100,000 Israelis to be settled in the West Bank by the end of the decade. To accomplish this goal, vast urban settlements were to be built offering subsidised housing to attract settlers. Private land purchases by Israelis was also to contribute to the goal.

In 1983 Mattiyahu Drobles, head of the Settlement Department of the World Zionist Organisation and a Likud activist, presented a 30-year master plan for the West Bank which envisaged 165 more settlements and a population which would reach parity with the estimated 1,000,000 Arabs in the area. This estimate was later downgraded to 400,000 Jews by the year 2000 and 530,000 in 2010. So far, 23,000 settlers have taken up residence in the West Bank, an increase of 500 percent since 1977.

In his attempt to encourage private speculations into West Bank land, Arik Sharon offered government contracts to Israeli real estate companies. He obtained the cooperation of Yigal Hurvitz, then the minister of finance, to make available interest free loans from the Bank of Israel to these companies. He also apparently instructed military and police authorities in the West Bank to cooperate with these companies. His prime target, it appeared, was any land plot adjacent to an existing settlement which would facilitate its expansion. This occurred despite an Israeli High Court ruling in January 1979 that Jewish settlements could not be built on private land for reasons of security.

How They Stole the Land

With an eye out for high profit, several Israeli real estate companies and individual land dealers obtained permission from the government to invest in West Bank lands. They sent their agents into Arab towns and villages to speculate.



A forged general power of attorney document. By extending their validity to 15 years the authorities opened the door for fraud.

They encountered several Arab land dealers who, tempted by a large cut of the profit they were promised, offered their services. When there were no land dealers in a specific area, the Israelis created ones. The real estate agents also approached the heads of several Arab villages (*mukhtars*) and requested their cooperation. Those who refused were soon replaced by military authorities with collaborators. The village *mukhtar* is the only person who can legally certify local land transactions.

Although the government and other high financiers like the WZO were willing to buy off any land that the real estate agents were able to obtain, purchase activity was concentrated on the area of the West Bank closest to the 'green line.' Land closest to a settlement or within a 30-minute drive from the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway was considered highly profitable. Furthermore, land prices in these areas were only a fraction of those inside Israel. Whereas a dunum of land cost US 10,000 dollars just across the 'green line,' the same size plot cost US 500 dollars on this side of the line.

Since few landowners were willing to sell, the real estate agents turned to roguery and violence to obtain their objectives. The Arab landowners not only considered the death penalty imposed by Jordan on those who sell land to Israelis but most importantly the political ramifications inherent in any land deal between an Israeli and a Palestinian.

Nevertheless, the real estate companies ventured into the West Bank and evidence cited by police in the recent land scandal shows that their illegal land deals started as early as 1980, only a few months after the Likud government adopted Sharon's suggestion to allow private investors to purchase West Bank land. The real estate agents apparently established a sophisticated network with representatives in Arab villages, government and military departments and in West Bank police stations.

According to Arab legal experts and evidence uncovered by investigators, the network operated like a pyramid with both real estate agents and Arab collaborators at the bottom, and government officials at the top. In several cases it went as follows: The Israeli agent approaches an Arab *simsar* who agrees to cooperate in return for a percentage of the profit. The *simsar* then approaches the landowner and offers him a reasonable price for his plot, without telling him in whose possession the plot will end up. If the landowner agrees, then the rest is easy. The land will be sold to the real estate agent in a "proper" manner. If the landowner refuses, on the other hand, the agent and the *simsar* will approach the village *mukhtar*, particularly the ones placed there by the military and obtain his signature on a land deed concerning that plot. The land deed would already have the forged signature of the owner. The deed is then taken to the land registrar's office in a nearby town and the deal finalised. Several registrar clerks are under possible suspicion by police for involvement in the scandal.

After the deal has been finalised, the land is then sold to either the government, settler groups or Israeli individuals with ambition to settle in the West Bank. Hundreds of dunums were added to many Israeli settlements in the northern West Bank area in this way including Ariel, Karnei Shomron, Emanuel and others.

In several cases, landowners are summoned to the military governor in their area and told that their plots are to be confiscated by the government. They are then told they can obtain cash compensation right away. Several days later the landowners will discover that their land was sold to real estate companies. In one case, a man's home in Jinsafut near Nablus was raided by police in early 1982. After the police had searched his house, allegedly searching for weapons, they asked him to sign a paper, written in Hebrew that they

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Meron Benvenisti was once Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek's right hand man. But over the years, Benvenisti has moved away from the annexationist mindset that dominates Israeli political thinking. Today he heads a research centre devoted to gathering information on the annexation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The following excerpts are from an interview which appeared in *Kol Ha'ir* (a local West Jerusalem weekly) about the future of Jerusalem.

Benvenisti

Meron Benvenisti:

Arabs Want to Bake Their Own Cake

Q: People say that Teddy Kollek favours the Arabs.

A: The fact that Teddy [Kollek], who is a tolerant and liberal-minded man, is in charge of the administration of the city, has worked to legitimise it. People think that he can still iron things out and that the situation isn't all that bleak.

Q: Can't he influence the manner in which problems are solved?

A: Whoever runs this city... must realise that he's the mayor of two-thirds of the population; but the other third of the population sees him as a tyranical occupier. When it comes down to it, he rules over the Arab population of East Jerusalem solely by virtue of military coercion. Besides, a lot of important decisions about the city are made by the government. For instance, billions of dollars have been invested in the Jewish Quarter [of the Old City]. It was supposed to have expressed a national aspiration, but its more like a manifestation of national coercion. The Jewish Quarter was reconstructed, but what was the upshot? A situation was created in which 600 families now live there; but three metres away from them is one of the worst slums in the Moslem Quarter. How can we explain why there's such a gap between the two [neighbourhoods]?

Q: The municipality is spending a lot of money these days in the Moslem Quarter as well.

A: The work being done in the Moslem Quarter at present is for getting rid of the public nuisances that bother the Jews. They want to get rid of the antennas that ruin the skyline and improve the sewage system so that the smell doesn't bother the Jews. But nothing is being done to improve the living standards of the residents of the Moslem Quarter.

Q: Haven't a lot of institutions been set up to solve some of the problems of East Jerusalem?

A: We're trying to translate the conflict between us into a class conflict and create the illusion that it can be solved through the accepted means — that means through budget allocations [to finance social programmes]. That's what the position of Adviser on Arab Affairs is for... We've made our rule over the city more efficient by decreasing the use of brute force. That's the reason why we encourage activities organised under our auspices... but we're unwilling to accept [Palestinian] residents' independently organised activities... We don't seem to understand that their objective is not to get a larger slice of the cake. They want to bake their own cake. They aspire to be free and therefore we should allow them to run their affairs on their own...

When all's said and done, Likudniks won't find fault with Kollek in working for their objectives.

Q: Would it be better if Kollek wasn't the mayor?

A: Without him, although the whole thing wouldn't explode, people would see the true situation. The true price for attaining a Jewish majority... in a united Jerusalem. For today, they mistakenly believe that it does not entail a price... Look, I like [Kollek], but he should have let people understand the price. What he did was simply to hold out the carrot; but behind the carrot was the whip of the national strategy which aspires to control the area and ignores the Arab population's resistance to those plans.

Q: If the Arab minority doesn't want to accept the rule of the Jewish majority, why don't they rebel?

A: It won't suddenly explode here like it did in Belfast, because the Arab minority is helpless and we have a total monopoly over the social, political and economic resources. The Arabs aren't like the Catholics in Ireland; they can't prevent the entry of Jews into their neighbourhoods by force. The Palestinians were never hardened soldiers. They're also helpless because they believe in their own propaganda. They believe in the Deir Yassin model and are convinced that a serious provocation on their part will result in the Jews loading them on trucks and expelling them over the border. I think there's something to this, especially in light of recent developments. And now, with Defence Minister Rabin reinstating the methods of punishment that Begin abolished, they know that all and all, rebellion will create more problems than solutions.

Q: Teddy Kollek himself wants Arab councillors on the city council. But up to now, they haven't seemed to be all that anxious.

A: Teddy Kollek is only willing to accept an Arab councillor that we approve of. He wants some Sif-a din A-Zou'abi, or one of the *mukhtars* or some other moderate. We won't accept elected representatives because we are only willing to grant equal rights to individuals and not to the collective. We are unwilling to grant the Arab collective legitimacy, because then the situation will become more symmetrical. In order to avoid granting them legitimacy, we say that they want to annihilate us and that all their representatives are from the Rejection Front. Take Khalil Abu Zayyad for example, whom they now want to deport. They've started to call him "the terrorist Zayyad" on the news, in spite of the fact that the military review board wasn't convinced that he was involved in subversive activities.

Q: For many years, you were part of the system. You were even responsible for dealing with the Arabs of East Jerusalem.

A: I myself contributed to the legitimisation of the situation by lessening tension. But you ought to remember that that was in a totally different period. During the first few years, it was still possible to begin with a clean slate. In spite of this, by grasping things on the symptomatic plane — similar to a social worker — I helped to allow the Israeli system to rule without making the moral cost manifest. In retrospect, I feel that I'm partly to blame for what has happened. (Translation: Orman Yakutieli, *Kol Ha'ir*, August 23, 1985).

Purity of Arms

One of the Israeli army's most cherished myths is "purity of arms." However, in the wake of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the widespread civilian suffering that ensued, even this myth began to be eroded. Hence, it is not all that surprising to find Israeli journalists digging into the past to see whether "purity of arms" was ever more than a myth. The following excerpts are from a much longer series of testimonies about an operation which took place immediately after the June 1967 war, when the Israeli army was ordered to seal the West Bank off from Jordan.

The journalist who collected the testimonies, Eyal Ehrlich, *introduces the article by recalling how the euphoria of the Israeli public in the months after the war made it less than anxious to hear about the more unsavoury aspects of victory. So it is that eighteen years had to pass before this story could be told to the public.*

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Aharon Greenstein, a soldier in the Fourth Brigade (today he is employed by the administrative branch of the Herut movement): "Immediately after the end of the Six Day War my regiment was sent to the Jericho region. We were under the command of Yaakov Nariyah. We were given the job of sealing off the border along the Jordan [River] by means of nighttime ambushes. At our first briefing, given to us by an officer whose name I no longer recall, we were told that if we encountered refugees, we should shoot at them. I asked the officers about what we should do if we heard the cries of a baby. We were told not to be girls.

"We set up one of our ambushes on a hill... when we heard people approaching, we hid and when they got closer, we lit up the area and started firing. They were about 50-70 metres away. They were refugees; we saw the bundles they were carrying. We fired a lot... two of them were hit — a 16 year old boy and an old man. I asked one of the officers what all of this was for and he replied: 'Don't be a girl.' "

Ephraim Ronen, squadron commander (today he lives and works in the Nir Zvi moshav): "I didn't report how many refugees we ambushed. I didn't deal with statistics. Tens of refugees were killed. More or less 30. That's how you seal off a border..."

Yitzhak Tishler, a brigade intelligence officer (today he is a commentator on economic affairs): "To treat the subject in a fair manner you would have to go to the Prime Minister's Office and to the Ministry of Defence to find out what the policy of the political echelon was in the summer of 1967. At the time, we weren't worried about terrorists. The only traffic [across the border] was that of refugees crossing over to the West Bank. At the time there were neither terrorists nor Egyptian commandos. I recall that the policy immediately following the war was to ambush refugees and shoot at them in order to deter them from returning to the West Bank..."

Menachem Ronen, the commander of Greenstein's unit (today he owns and operates a clothes store in Ramat Gan): "I have to be careful about what I say. A few times, after having laid in wait, we encountered refugees. Some were wounded and there were deaths. The order we received was to use standard IDF procedure for identifying figures. We shouted out the password three times and if no one answered, we opened fire. We could have shouted the password seventeen times and it wouldn't have made much difference. Not only did we open fire, we also combed the area afterwards. I mean, we knew what it was all about. It wasn't a one time event.... After the first time we shot at border trespassers, everybody knew that they were refugees. I don't remember our having taken any records about the refugees who were killed. Nobody took records. We buried them ourselves. The refugees we took prisoner were handed over to the military government."

Yaakov Nariyah, a regimental commander (today he is a director of Solel Boneh and very active in the Labour

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Palestine and Culture

Book Review by
A.Clare Brandabur

Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876-1948.
Introduction and Commentary by Walid Khalidi.
Published by the Institute for Palestine Studies, Washington, DC, 1984.
Designed by Richard Zonghi.
Printed in USA by Thomas Todd Company, Boston.
474 black and white photographs. Six maps in colour.

Professor Walid Khalidi, Fellow at Harvard's Centre for Middle East Studies, has published a book which is graphically stunning and historically profound. *Before Their Diaspora*, the third major photographic history of the Palestinian people to appear in the past few years, adds immeasurably to those of Jonathan Dimbleby and Sarah Graham-Brown.

The photographs have been painstakingly selected — 474 out of a collection of some 10,000 in the archives of the Institute for Palestine Studies, once in Beirut, now in Geneva. Tastefully arranged, they create a sense of the palpable existence of a vital culture, a thriving educational, religious, and economic life, sturdy and irrefutable. Over the solid reality thus invoked, over the figures and faces, the minarets and terraces, the looming threat of extinction superimposes a slight shimmer as of mirage.

But the book, prepared over a period of five years, is much more than a photographic study. The historical introductions and detailed chronologies prefacing each of the five sections, together with the succinct annotations which identify and in many cases cross-reference the photographs, combine to create a major document embodying the Palestinian past.

As a charming foreword, Professor Khalidi has placed two photographs which locate the spiritual centre of the culture and establish visually a primary theme of the book: the harmonious relationship between the two ancient faiths of Arab Palestine. First comes a very old photograph of the Haram al-Sharif surmounted by the Mosque of the Dome-of-the-Rock, the earliest surviving Muslim monument, built by the caliph Abd al-Sharif el-Malik from 688 to 691. (p. 21) Next appears a picture from the crypt below the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem with its semicircle of hanging lamps. The first is titled "Jerusalem: Allah's Choice", the second, "Jesus: Allah's Word." This harmony manifests itself in many photographs throughout the volume: students of both faiths pose together for graduation pictures, for example, and dignitaries of both faiths attend civic functions, as in the very early photograph of the dedication of a hospital at Sheikh Badr near Deir Yassin. (p. 42)

Though the Zionist aggression overshadows *Before Their Diaspora*, it is nevertheless a positive book: it intends to "shed some light on the Palestinians as a people before their diaspora, and on the genesis and evolution of the Palestine problem during its formative phase." (p. 6) However, the magnitude of the cataclysm toward which this history tends is indicated in the title of the fifth and final section covering the single year from 1947 to 1948: "Part Five — Civil War and the Destruction of the Palestinian Community."

Soap factory in Nablus. Twenty-four such factories in Nablus provided the most important export from Palestine in the 19th and early 20th century.

Palestinian History in Photos

Khalidi observes that victims of injustice are obsessed with the history of conflict in direct proportion to the grievousness of the wrong inflicted on them, and the argument of the volume bears him out. Zionism, "a Jewish political movement of European provenance," he says, "subjected the Palestinians to the deadliest threat, short of physical annihilation, to which a people can be subjected — the denial of their birthright in their ancestral home." (p. 13)

The rich intellectual and scholarly life of the community in pre-diaspora times is evident in photos of a multitude of colleges and village schools. Authors, translators, novelists, poets, educators, and religious teachers abound. Here are George Antonius, author of *The Arab Awakening*, and Mousa al-Alami who received a law degree from Cambridge University and who in 1939 was a member of the Palestine Delegation to the London Conference. He later set up and ran a model agricultural training school for boys in Jericho. At the centre of graduation pictures at several different schools is Khalil Sakakini, founder of many of these schools, whose emphasis on character development and personal responsibility influenced generations of Palestinian students. We see poet-patriot-prisoner Mu'in Bseisu as a handsome boy standing at his mother's side.

A decorous social life is evident in photographs of weddings and celebrations of religious festivals, family gatherings and entertainment. One charming photo from the Friends School in Ramallah depicts three young actors costumed for roles in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Thriving agricultural and industrial activity are represented in shots of orange and grape harvests, in soap factories, fishing vessels, jewellers' shops, and abundant flocks of sheep and goats. The author provides statistics which demonstrate the overwhelming preponderance of Arab ownership of acreage and production in all these activities during this period before the Catastrophe.

The third section is devoted to the Great Rebellion of 1936 to 1939, when the British rounded up thousands of Palestinians and placed them behind barbed wire, expelled others from the country, and killed many more. The extent of Palestinian resistance during this period may come as a surprise even to readers more or less familiar with this history. Still more shocking is the massive scale of British military force used to put down this Arab revolt: the British used their overwhelming military superiority to crush the Palestinian rebellion and destroy Palestinian property. Thousands of troops with hundreds of tanks were brought in, inflicting great loss of life and destroying many buildings in retaliation for political protest. Great areas of ancient Jaffa and residential sections of Jerusalem were simply blown up.

Another shock arising from the history of the late 1930s is the extent of collaboration between British and Jewish military units against the Arabs, and in particular against the civilian population. For example, the Special Night Squads (SNS) were organised by the British officer Orde Wingate of World War II fame. These squads, composed of Jewish and British soldiers, carried out "hit and run" raids at night on Palestinian villages. They served as training ground for leaders of Jewish terrorist gangs including Moshe Dayan who is quoted as having credited Wingate with decisive influence on all subsequent military commanders. Palestinian resentment of and resistance to British pro-Zionist policies thus become more understandable.

The chronologies show a rising incidence of Jewish terrorism from 1935 when the Revisionists left the World Zionist Organisation to create military units intended to seize Palestine by force. In October of 1935 the Irgun was formed and huge shipments of arms were smuggled into the country. The rising crescendo of terrorism directed both at the British and at the Palestinians forced the British to abandon the Mandate and to turn the problem over to the United Nations. The list of operations carried out by the Irgun and Stern gang includes hijacking of airplanes, the taking of hostages, countless attacks on civilians, the mutilation and mining of executed victims' bodies, and the blowing up without warning of heavily occupied buildings.

In the face of this onslaught Palestinian society produced leaders of courage and vision, and the price they paid for championing the Palestinian cause against the vast forces arrayed against them was high. There were martyrs in successive generations of many families. Mousa Kazim Pasha al-Husseini, elder statesman of Palestinian politics in the 1920s and 1930s, appears on the book's cover in a thoughtful, dignified pose. The 81-year-old patriarch appears again at the centre of an unarmed demonstration which he lead in protest of British policies in 1933: here al-Husseini is being struck by the truncheon of a British soldier. A throng of mourners at Damascus Gate attends his funeral in the photograph on the facing page. (p. 110) His son, Abd al-Qadir al-Husseini, graduate of the American University in Cairo, became guerrilla commander of the Jerusalem district during the Great Rebellion of 1936-39, and died fighting in the same district in 1948.

Many of the heroes whose faces look out from the pages of this book look out also from the cinder-block walls of today's refugee camps in Gaza and Ramallah, and from under scotch-tape on refrigerator doors in dormitories at Bir Zeit and an-Najah and Gaza Universities in the occupied territories. Like the intense and sensitive face of Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam, a religious teacher from Haifa who lead and was martyred in the first guerrilla operation of the Palestinian Resistance Movement. Perhaps it is for this reason that Professor Khalidi is justified in allowing, in addition to the calm self-assurance in the faces of these vanished heroes, a single note of hope at the conclusion of this vast work: the final photograph of blossoms over the Palestinian countryside is captioned, "If Winter come, can Spring be far behind?" ■

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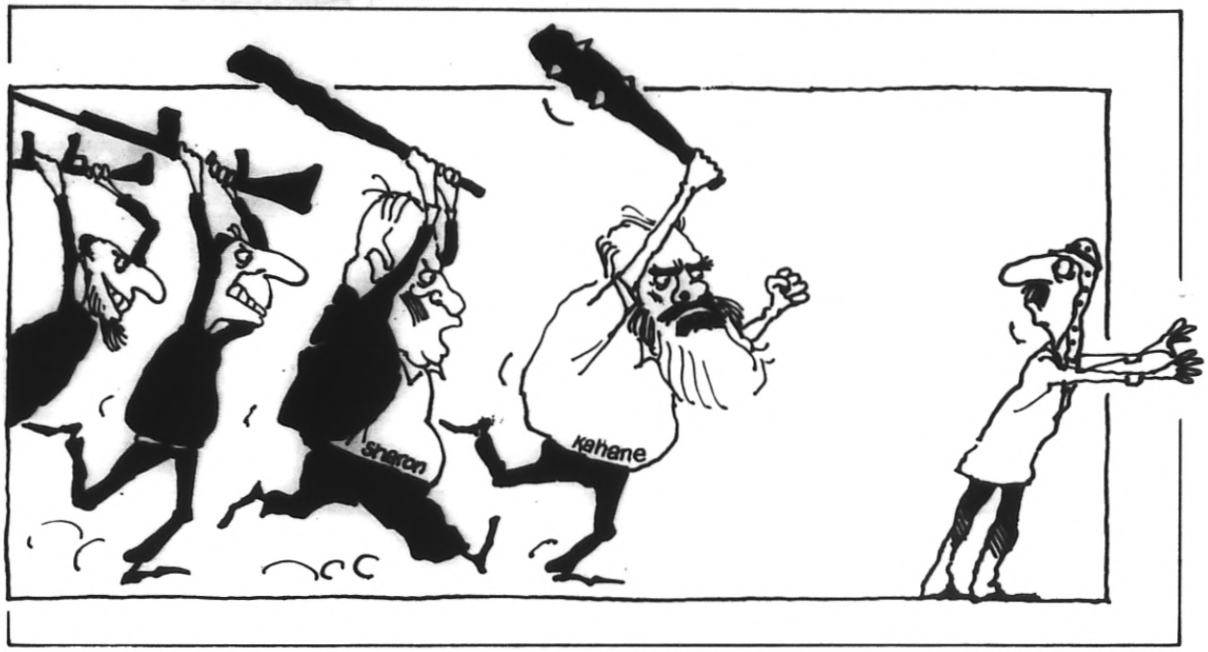


The shooting of two Israelis in the West Bank and the curfews slapped on Tulkarm and Jenin were prominently covered by the local press this week.

Palestinian newspapers didn't appear for the duration of Id al-Adha's four day holiday.

Id Al-Adha Gifts

Amid the car-bomb explosions in Lebanon, and the death and destruction there, Amal renewed its attack on the Palestinian camps. It started it just before Id al-Fitr [end of Ramadan] and it is resuming it just before Id al-Adha. We shall not forget this time that Amal has chosen. The Palestinians should realise that they are targeted by all the Lebanese militias. The responsibility of defending the camps should fall upon the Palestinians, especially after the failure of the Arab leaders in their latest summit. These Arab leaders came up with advice for the PLO to coordinate with the Lebanese government and work out a plan for their future dealings. But there are so many mini-states in Lebanon and each has its own interests. Therefore, all the PLO factions should realise that the Palestinian people is the target. They should do their best to protect their camps. Nothing changes the fact of what the Palestinian camps are facing.

AL QUDS
August 22

The Land Thefts, Whose Responsibility?

What is being published about the forged land deals is not new to the residents in the occupied territories. On more than one occasion the police did not implement court orders to stop work on Arab land. One Bidya resident was killed while he tried together with other citizens to stop Israeli bulldozers from working their land. It is unbelievable that all those deals, killings and blackmail did not arouse the suspicion of the authorities in the occupied territories. The power and protection enjoyed by the land dealers made them extend their protection, in turn, to the deals, which were serving the official policy calling for the settlement of the territories at any price. Even Shamir asked the police to take into consideration the 'nationalist' motives behind the land seizures. The criterion for truthfulness and seriousness in dealing with the case is by returning the land to its owners and to compensate them for the damages sustained.

AL TALI'A
August 22

The Syrian Conspiracy is Going On In Lebanon

More than five hundred Syrian pieces of equipment took part in clearing the remains of Sabra camp under the ugly pretext of beautifying Beirut, after the Damascus agreement. Nevertheless, the parties to the agreement overlooked the crime and declared that the Lebanese problem had been solved. But these same parties are facing a dangerous escalation of the fighting in Lebanon. This proves that all the leaderships in Lebanon are involved in the conspiracy being carried out by the Syrian regime. Instead of realising the importance of the Palestinian factor, the Lebanese leaders led by Amal are shelling Beirut camps. The logic of history says that once the Palestinians in Lebanon are slaughtered, then it will be the turn of the Lebanese sects.

AL FAJR
August 22

The Waiting Game... Till When?!

The US Congressman George Krokite calls for waiting until the present US administration is out of office. He also called for liberating the US administration from the influences of the Jewish lobby. Despite such clear statements by him and other Congressmen, they arouse pity when they call upon the Arabs to await the outcome of either the American or the Israeli elections. This same call is raised by certain Arab circles. They led to indefinite waiting by the Arabs. Perhaps the Arab leaders should abandon this game of waiting and start planning according to the interests of their own peoples. It has become clear that the US seeks peace on its own terms and to the exclusion of the PLO from any settlement. This means that the Palestinian problem will be dealt with from the civil rather than the national aspect. And while the Arabs and some very few Americans are trying to establish just and lasting peace, the US is trying to bring about the peace that serves its interests and those of Israel. Therefore the Arab leaders should not be caught in the trap of waiting again.

AL QUDS
August 23

The Broad Front

Following the latest Arab summit, there arose the need for a broad national front to stand in the face of this new alliance and defeat it. Intensive efforts are being made now to create such a front as soon as possible. While we appreciate these efforts, we hope that the creation of the front will be declared soon. For without it or the revival of the steadfastness front, it will be difficult to overcome the surrender approach.

AL MITHAQ
August 23

Why All the Fuss?

With all sincerity, understanding, responsibility and commitment we'd like to ask our colleagues this objective question. If all factions and trends are agreed upon the idea of the international conference and its role, why then are they raising all this fuss about the Palestinian-Jordanian agreement and the Arab-American dialogue? Isn't it strong to raise all this ado about something which is no more than a procedural thing? And if the Palestinian-Jordanian agreement is part of a complementary to the Fez Summit and if the peace move does not deviate from the declared invariables, and if the international conference is the agreed upon outcome as a framework for a just peaceful settlement, then why all these outbiddings? Let this be a quiet call for all those interested.

AL FAJR
August 24

The Reconciliation Committee!!

We have not so far seen the results or the activities of the reconciliation committees entrusted with the task of patching up differences among the Arabs. We do not expect them to achieve miracles or even to succeed in their tasks once they were set up. The Arab differences are growing bigger and deeper as is seen between Tunis and Libya. But we may cherish the hope that these committees, if they are active, may contribute something to stop further deterioration. Or are we daydreaming and our voices are lost in a jungle?

AL SHA'AB
August 24

Electric Company Supplies Threatened

by Khalil Touma

Electric supplies to nearly one-third of the West Bank population were seriously threatened August 22 when the Israeli Regional Electricity Company demanded full payment of IS9.2 billion (US 6.1 million dollars) in electricity bills from the Arab-owned Jerusalem Electricity Company (JEC). The JEC buys 90 percent of its electric supplies from the Israeli company. The threat of electric disruptions subsided, however, after both sides agreed that the JEC could pay the debt within one month.

In a cable sent to the JEC August 22, the Israeli company warned that unless the JEC paid the full debt within four days, they would start reducing electricity supplies. The same day another letter was received from the Israeli Ministry of Energy demanding the JEC employ Israelis in the company.

According to JEC officials and employees, the purpose of the Israeli measures is to force the Arab company to declare bankruptcy, thus allowing the Israeli authorities to take it over.

During an emergency meeting August 24, the workers expressed their belief that the Israeli authorities are creating financial difficulties for the company in order to force it to declare bankruptcy. This, they said, will allow the authorities to appoint an Israeli custodian who will be authorised to administer company affairs and appoint Israeli staff members, a demand repeatedly put on the table by the Ministry of Energy.

The Palestinian-Jordanian Committee was strongly criticised because of the conditions it imposed on releasing funds to bail the company out of its crisis. Those conditions included staff cutbacks, shutting down the company's generating station in Shufat, and administrative and financial reforms. The committee also recently agreed to pay JD1 million (about 2.5 million US dollars), about one-third of the company's debts. The amount, however, is to be paid in two instalments in the next two months, which will be too late for the deadline given by the Israeli company. Anwar Nusseibeh, the Chairman of the Board, told *Al Fajr* he expected the Joint Committee to fulfil its commitments to the company "for the great national importance of the case," as he put it. Nusseibeh, however, expressed confidence that the company's position is strong. There is no reason to worry, he said. Nusseibeh added that normally the difference between the cost of power and its selling price is subsidised by the government, as is the case with the Israeli company and similar companies in Jordan. The JEC, however, is not subsidised by anybody. Nusseibeh stressed that the JEC does not intend to employ Israeli staff members because it strives to provide a harmonious work atmosphere in the Arab company, and because it has sufficient competent personnel. The decision is not based on racist or religious grounds, he said.

The elected and deposed mayor of Nablus, Bassam Shaka'a, speaking at a rally in support of the JEC in 1980. Anwar Nusseibeh, head of the JEC, is seated next to Shaka'a.

Local residents see the recent Israeli harassment as a continuation of previous Israeli instigated hardships. Palestinians believe that the Israelis will not renew the JEC's concession when it expires in January of 1988.

The JEC general manager, engineer Munther Abu al-Sa'ud, did not rule out the idea that the Israelis intend to take over the Arab company. He told *Al Sha'ab* Arabic daily August 23 that the company's debts are the result of Israeli practices against the Arab company. The authorities create economic hardships for the company, he said, and then exploit these conditions in order to control it.

The debts of the 30-year-old company are due to losses resulting from several obstacles and conditions which, Abu al-Sa'ud said, were instigated by the Israelis. He explained that the Israeli company is the one entitled to fix the price of electricity. It allows the Jerusalem company only seven percent profit. Moreover, 14 percent of the electric current is lost during transfer from the Israeli company metre to the consumer's metre. This loss could be reduced if the JEC were allowed to maintain its own current supply, he said.

The electric current generated by the company's power station in Shufat, north of Jerusalem, is yet another reason for the loss. The cost of the fuel used to generate nine megawatts is more than the selling price fixed by the Israeli company. Wages, maintenance and other expenses eat up profits further.

A third reason for the high debts as stated by the general manager is the high interest rate on the company's current debts. This interest amounts to 18 percent monthly, in addition to the lawsuit fees the company has to pay every time its assets are frozen. About one-third of the total debt, or IS3.5 billion, is interest and legal fees, Abu al-Sa'ud said.

The news of Israeli threats and demands, which quickly spread among workers and employees of the company in particular and residents of the occupied territories in general, aroused much concern that this would be a step toward the long attempted takeover of the Arab company and its large concession.

No more than 48 hours after the warning, JEC workers convened in an emergency meeting and decided to take a salary cut of 20 percent to help the company pay its debts. They also decided to put themselves at the company's disposal by working overtime and even cancelling their *Id al-Adha* feast holiday if necessary.

Curfew

Continued from page 1

interviews with Israel Radio.

Two Palestinian groups took credit for the two operations. In Tunis, a statement issued by the PLO indicated that two groups from the martyr Kamal 'Udwan unit carried out the two operations in line with an earlier decision taken by the PLO higher military council to step up military action against the Israeli occupation authorities. The statement said the two Israelis attacked were intelligence officers. In Damascus, the Abu-Nidal group (which split from the PLO in the early 1970s) also issued a statement claiming responsibility.

The attacks were viewed with utmost seriousness by the Israeli authorities. Israeli military sources were quoted as saying that Palestinian commandos appear to have adopted a new tactic in their attacks. At least five Israelis have been shot at close range in public places over the past few months by attackers who then disappeared into large crowds. In addition to the Tulkarm and Jenin incidents, an Israeli was killed in Nablus three weeks ago, and two others in Ramallah and Al-Bireh several months ago, all in the same style. *The Jerusalem Post* reported that the Israeli authorities questioned thousands of Jenin and Tulkarm residents, reflecting the gravity with which they view the situation.

The two attacks triggered a wave of anti-Arab incitement in Israel and calls for more severe collective punishment measures against Palestinians. MK Geula Cohen (Tehiya) called on the Israeli government to impose heavy punishment on local (Palestinian) residents to "deter them from carrying out such attacks." She also called for renewing and expanding settlement activities in the West Bank. Likewise, MK Uzi Landau (Likud) called for harsh measures against local residents. Landau blamed PLO leaders who now reside in Jordan for the attacks and called for strong action against them.

Knesset member Binyamin Ben-Eliezer (Yahad), who previously served as military coordinator of the Israeli Defence Ministry's activities in the West Bank, called on the government to reconsider imposing the death penalty against Palestinian commandos who kill Israelis. He also called for tightened security precautions in the occupied territories, including action against political activists and what he called "inciters."

MK Yossi Sarid (Citizens' Rights Movement) denounced the killing, but blamed it on the occupation which, as he put it, "degrades the lives of Palestinians and Israelis alike." The Israeli Peace Now movement said in a statement issued August 25 that the two Israelis were victims of the Israeli occupation. The statement added that the circle of violence would not come to a halt until the Israeli occupation ceases.

Arms

Continued from page 10

Party): "After the war, a lot of refugees from the West Bank, including residents from Jericho, fled to Jordan. We were clearly interested in preventing refugees from crossing over to the area in our control via the border. This was before the time of Al Fatah and the terrorists. It was simply a problem of turning the Jordan [River] into the border... The ambushers received orders on how to act if they encountered unidentified figures. They were supposed to shout the password three times and if they failed to get a reply, they were to open fire above their heads. If the figures remained, they were supposed to shoot at them. Absolutely no one can claim to have been ordered to shoot at women and children. That never occurred. But we were ordered to prevent people from crossing the border.

"It's true that men and women were killed but I don't remember any children being killed... To come and say that there was an order to shoot at civilians is deceptive. Although, perhaps a soldier lying in ambush who saw that he was shooting at refugees may have taken that to be the order he was fulfilling."

Yitzhak Shmueli, a platoon sergeant (today he is a sculptor and lives in Ein Hod): "It was a miserable situation. On one hand we were ordered to seal off the border by means of ambushes and on the other hand, the Jordanians were sending refugees back to the West Bank at night in groups of 10-15 people. As a result of the ambushes there were a lot of unfortunate incidents and civilians were killed. In the ambushes I participated in, I gave a clear order not to shoot. I didn't accept the idea that orders have to be obeyed no matter what. There is also such thing as one's conscience and there are orders that come into conflict with one's conscience. In such a case you don't carry them out."

Chaim Herzog, the military governor of the West Bank from June 7-13, 1967 (today he is the president of Israel): "I'm not familiar with any story like that. If anything, it was the other way around. Various people applied to us for exit visas to Jordan." (Translation: Eyal Ehrlich, *Koteret Rashit*, August 14,

August 21, 1985

HAND GRENADES AND MOLOTOV COCKTAILS THROWN AT ISRAELI VEHICLES

A hand grenade was tossed at an Israeli military vehicle in Khan Younis market. Two days ago another hand grenade was thrown at a military vehicle south of Nuseirat camp.

A Molotov cocktail was thrown also at an Israeli vehicle travelling between Jabalya and Gaza.

YOUTHS RELEASED

The authorities released Shukri Mubarak Odeh Hamdan of Deir Jrir after serving an 8-year jail term. Jalazon resident Jamal Sa'd al-Din al-Qatami was released after a detention of 10 months and 10 days in Nablus central prison.

IS8 MILLION INCOME TAX

Customs officers raided the shoe shop of Sa'di Nayef al-Sa'di in Gaza and asked him to pay IS8 million as income tax. The shop was closed when the owner declared he could not afford to pay such a heavy tax.

FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS PARTICIPATE IN WORK AT JALAZON CAMP

Foreign volunteers from the US and Europe took part in the voluntary work being carried out in Jalazon camp. Some Jewish members of the International Work Camp participated also.

August 22, 1985

EXPLOSIVES CHARGE IN NABLUS

An Israeli army spokesperson declared that a small explosives charge was discovered on the roof of a watch tower in the centre of Nablus. The charge was defused. An Israeli-made grenade was also discovered at the entrance of a cinema house in the city. It was safely detonated.

DEIR EL-BALAH CAMP – WHAT LIES AHEAD?

Israeli forces are preparing a number of pre-fab houses in Tel Muntar settlement east of Gaza. Israeli bulldozers are levelling the ground in some areas of Deir el-Balah so as to move the northern part of Deir el-Balah camp to this new area. Eight thousand refugees live in Deir el-Balah.

LAND DEALER ARRESTED

The Israeli police arrested Samir Ibrahim Odeh from Habieh village, for being involved in the land deals in the West Bank.

50 KILOGRAMS OF HASHISH SEIZED IN HEBRON

Hebron police seized 50 kilograms of hashish from a number of drug dealers. The amount was on its way from Beer Sheba to Hebron for marketing.

YOUTH SENTENCED

A military court in Nablus sentenced Jamal Ali al-Shafi'i, from Shwaikah village, to 4 years in prison and 1 year suspended for 'security' reasons.

Anabta Homes Demolished, Sealed

Israeli army bulldozers demolished two houses in Anabta, near Tulkarm August 22 on the pretext that members of the households were involved in a guerrilla operation against a military bus early in 1983. The army also closed off another house in the city on the same pretext.

The three residents, Khaled Ahmad Kana'an, Sa'ad Abdullah Thawaby and Tareq Ahmad Nimri were arrested two months ago on suspicion of belonging to a guerrilla cell that attacked an army bus in 1983 in the Tulkarm area. Two soldiers were injured. The three have been detained without trial.

Members of an Anabta family stand behind the rubble of their house, demolished by the Israeli army last week.

PRACTICES AGAINST RESIDENTS OF JABAL AL-MUKABBER

Members of the border police stationed north of Jabal al-Mukabber are harassing the residents at night. Flood lights are directed at the houses under the pretext of monitoring the movements of the residents. They also issue tickets to car drivers for looking at the border police cars while driving.

ISRAELI BUS STONED

An Israeli bus was stoned near Neve Ya'acov settlement north of Jerusalem, Israel Radio reported. The driver sustained injuries and was taken to hospital for treatment.

JANYA MUKHTAR RELEASED, SEAL WITHDRAWN

The Israeli authorities released Ahmad Ali Abd al-Hamid, the former *mukhtar* of Janya. He was taken into custody for 16 days. His seal was cancelled. The authorities also released Jamal Sa'd al-Din al-Qatanani from Jalazon camp, after serving a 1-year jail term for 'security' reasons.

August 23, 1985

2 HOUSES DEMOLISHED IN ANABTA

The Israeli army on Thursday night demolished two houses and sealed a third in the town of Anabta in the Tulkarm district. An army spokesperson said the three houses belonged to members of an armed Palestinian cell who were recently detained for anti-Israeli attacks.

Israeli authorities alleged that the cell carried out several attacks in 1983, including firing at an Israeli jeep and bus, wounding two persons, in addition to killing a suspected collaborator in the town.

Eyewitnesses said bulldozers arrived in the village at 2:30 am and razed the 12-room residence of Yusef Kana'an and the 4-room residence of Abdullah Mustafa Dawabi. The home of a third resident, Ahmad Hussein Namari, which consisted of 4 rooms, was sealed.

ARAB GUARD FOUND DEAD IN HOLON

The body of an Arab watchman from Jabalya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip was found in the Israeli town of Holon where he worked. Police said the cause of the death was a severe blow (possibly with stones) to the man's head. The man's identity was not released.

2 BOMBS DEFUSED

Two bombs found in Asqalan and Gaza were safely dismantled by police sappers, Israel Radio reported. The first bomb was found in a factory in Asqalan and the other was found in a soldiers' bus stop at the entrance to Gaza, the radio report said. Several Arab youths who happened to be in the vicinity were taken into custody for questioning.

GRENADE ATTACK IN JABALYA

A hand grenade was tossed at an Israeli army vehicle as it drove on the Jabalya-Beit Lahia road in the Gaza Strip. Troops sealed off the area and began a search. No injuries or damage were reported.

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE SACKED

The Israeli authorities ordered Mousa Atta from Jalazoun refugee camp, near Ramallah, to be dismissed from his job at the Ramallah hospital. The decision followed Atta's imprisonment for 18 days and an IS25,000 fine imposed on him recently.

10 JENIN MEN FREED

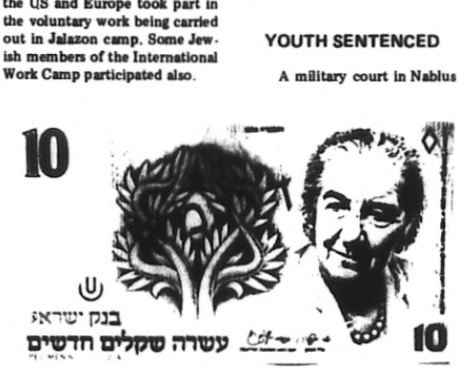
Israeli military authorities released the following Jenin youths after they completed prison sentences on 'security' charges: Abd al-Hamid Barakat, 8 years in prison; Subhi Ghaleb Damaj, 7 years in prison; Abdallah Awad Abd al-Hamid, 6 years in prison; Husam al-Din Mahmoud, 5 years in prison; Jamal Jairtah, 3 years in prison; Nasser Abu al-Saba', 2 years and 3 months in prison; Yaser Abd al-Qader Shukri, 4 years in prison; Abdullah Yusef Barakat, 3.5 years in prison; Asa'ad Abd al-Samad, 3.5 years in prison; and Maher Ali Farraj, 3.5 years in prison.

2 BETHLEHEM DETAINEES FREED

Israeli authorities released Jamal Jaber Hamamreh of Husan village after completing a 3-year prison term on 'security' charges. Ibrahim Hamdan al-Ta'mari of Bethlehem was also released after completing a 4-year prison term.

AL-BIREH, NABLUS MEN RELEASED

Israeli authorities released Anwar Ibrahim Shbat, 30, of al-Bireh after completing an 11-year prison term on 'security' charges. In Nablus, Israeli authorities released Jawad Wasfi Ahed al-Takrouri after completing a 2-month prison term on 'security' charges.



The 10 'New Shekel' bill (above) will replace the present 10,000 shekel bill (below), as Israel omitted three zeroes from its currency.

August 26, 1985

EXPLOSIVES FOUND IN PETAH TIKVA AND NABLUS

An explosives device containing three dynamite sticks was discovered in a park in Petah Tikva near Tel Aviv and dismantled by Israeli police sappers. The police, who were called to the scene by a passerby, closed off the area and combed it for perpetrators. An Israeli military official discovered a molotov bomb in Nablus and managed to dismantle it.

ARAB-ISRAELI PRISONERS CLASH

Three prisoners were injured, one severely, when Israeli and Arab prisoners at the Russian Compound prison in Jerusalem clashed. The reason for the clash, in which razor blades were used, was not revealed.

ARAB VEHICLES STONED

Israeli youngsters were reported to have hurled stones at passing Arab vehicles on the West Bank-Gaza highway, damaging several windshields and side windows as a result. All cars attacked had West Bank and Gaza licence plates.

SOLDIERS HARASS CHILDREN

Army reserve units on duty in Ramallah harassed Palestinian children and destroyed their kites on the pretext that the kites exhibited the four colours of the Palestinian flag. The soldiers also stopped several passersby in the downtown area and forced them to wipe off political graffiti.

Schools

Continued from page 7

1980 to expand the school and build a secondary school with a larger orphanage in one of Jerusalem's residential neighbourhoods, but the Israelis have not yet given them a construction permit. He added that they received the money from the Norwegian Refugee Council, which has been financing the school since it was first opened.

Waqf Schools

The three main *waqf* schools — owned and operated by the Islamic authorities — which existed before 1967 were expanded to 19 after 1969. This was due to the annexationist policy which Israel followed after the 1967 occupation. "These schools," said al-Nammari, "have played an important educational role, despite their poor facilities, by absorbing a considerable number of the students who refused to stay in the government schools after the Israeli curriculum was imposed."

Most of these schools, which are administered by the Islamic *waqf*, are located inside the Old City in old houses. "Some of the schools," said Ikrima Sabri, a member of the *waqf* administration, "lack the basic requirements of schools, and this is because of the Israeli refusal to grant construction permits." These schools are supported financially by the Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf (*waqf* properties), and they provide free education. Every year the Jordanian Ministry provides scholarships for many Palestinian high school graduates to receive teacher training in Jordanian or foreign colleges and educational institutions on the condition that they commit themselves to teach in the *waqf* for two years.

Al-Aqsa Kindergartens

In 1976, several members of the Muslim religious community affiliated with the *waqf* administration initiated an educational committee called al-Zaka Committee. (*Zaka* is a religious tax levied on Muslims.) Among the objectives set by this committee was to "take care of the children and give them Islamic education by opening kindergartens, offering services for the orphans and the blind, and opening schools and institutions."

The project was first begun by opening a number of kindergartens to which five elementary grades have been added. One of the members of the committee told *Al Fajr* that more than 2500 children now study in this educational project.

There is a special concentration on the Islamic religion in these schools "because they are intended to educate the students in Islam." All the students at these schools are Muslims, although the door is open to Christians. Abu Jamal, a member of al-Zaka Committee, told *Al Fajr* that "the Islamic character of the project has discouraged Christians from studying in these schools." Abu Jamal added that the al-Aqsa schools and kindergartens are completely independent and are not affiliated with any government but only financed by al-Zaka.

UNRWA Schools

There are six United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools within Jerusalem's jurisdiction, one of them inside the Old City. There are also two schools in the Shu'fat refugee camp, three kilometres from the Old City. The camp was built in 1966 when 3000 Palestinian refugees were transferred from the densely populated Old City. All these schools are confined to refugee students who number 2812 and who are living in East Jerusalem. In the past, all school supplies were provided by UNRWA, but in recent years the agency has had to cut back on services.

Except the two schools in Shu'fat which are well-equipped, the rest are all in rented places which were originally houses. Ahmad Mousa, head of the UNRWA Education Department in the Jerusalem district, told *Al Fajr* that the Agency has not yet managed to find alternative buildings because of the lack of land. He added that they have done their best to adjust the old buildings of UNRWA schools in Jerusalem and provide them with the best possible facilities.

UNRWA schools follow the Jordanian curriculum and are not responsible to the Israeli Education Ministry or to the education department of the Israeli municipality.

Private education does indeed handle the largest share of the burden of educating East Jerusalem students. They manage despite the difficulties of no new construction, looking for funds and overcrowdedness. And until government schools are indeed administered by a government of the people, private schools will continue to attract the largest number of students. ■

Terms of Fraud

Continued from page 8&9

claimed said there were no weapons in the house. Several days later, the man discovered that he had signed a purchase deed in which he had sold his 400-dunum plot. He filed a complaint in the Nablus Court, but has not gotten back his land.

According to legal experts in Nablus, there is evidence to prove that the military and police personnel supplied the Israeli land dealers with copies of signatures or ID cards of landowners to be used in forging land documents. The experts also say they can cite dozens of cases when military and police authorities were either helpful to the real estate agents or reluctant to enforce local and high court injunctions banning the real estate companies from working on Arab lands.

If a landowner is not summoned by the military, he will only know of the loss of his land when bulldozers and construction workers start working on his plot. He will protest and maybe even lay in front of the bulldozers but he will still be ordered off his land. He will complain to the police and the military governor in his area and may even publish a detailed account in the local papers telling how Israeli bulldozers uprooted thousands of olive trees and how they threatened him with machine-guns, etc. In 1981 alone there were at least 300 stories of this kind in the local papers. The stories, which sometimes appear in the Hebrew press, often begin with "Israeli authorities confiscated..." because it was common that Israeli military personnel be on the scene apparently to protect Israeli real estate agents and workers.

The landowner then hires a lawyer who files a complaint in the local court and sometimes is fortunate enough to get a work-stoppage injunction. The lawyer then appeals to the High Court when the real estate agent is not swayed by the court injunction, as is the case in many instances. Some even ignore High Court rulings. Lawyers then complain in the local papers that the military and police are hesitant to enforce the local and High Court ruling. Years go by and Israeli construction on the man's land continues. Soon he doesn't even recognise the former olive orchard. And it all appears so easy for the real estate agents who, on the average, can resell the land for as much as 15 times its original price.

In one bizarre case, 90-year-old Salim Hammanari, a landowner from Husan near Bethlehem, was taken to Tel Aviv in September 1979 by Shmuel Einan, a Tel Aviv-based land dealer. The old man was given a female companion. Several days later an Israeli surveyor was on his 400-dunum plot. His two sons inquired and found that the land now belonged to Einan. They complained to the Bethlehem court because the land was theirs, their father was in no shape to sell it. The court decided, however, that they could not prove ownership of the land, and the plot was then sold to the Himnota company which is affiliated to the WZO. The WZO then built a settlement on the plot in the nearby Gush Etzion bloc.

The police announced after the latest scandal was uncovered that they had received over 700 complaints from Arab landowners concerning illegal land deals. Arab farmers say they have filed thousands of complaints since the Israeli government permitted the Israelis to venture into Arab land. Only a fraction of these complaints have been attended to, the farmers stress. Now that it has been made public that Israeli military officials and police in those areas were involved in the scam, the farmers are sighing with relief. Whether this relief will last for long is another matter.

The Future

On May 22, 1980, a special cabinet committee including Arik Sharon, David Levy, Yigal Hurvitz and Ezer Weizman decided to expand six settlements in the northern West Bank by giving them "state" land and unregistered plots. Following that decision, Arik Sharon told reporters that "this can only be seen as a temporary solution to the land problems of Jewish settlements. We need to change the legal status of the settlements so that we can expropriate private land for them." A few days later, Plia Albeck, a Justice Ministry official, told reporters that the lands given to these settlements would not affect Arab-owned lands. "Lands privately owned by Arabs will become reservations in the middle of these planned towns," she said.

Reservations they have become, and it is only because the Likud is no longer in power that these "reservations" are intact. The present coalition government has so far not declared a clear-cut policy towards the settlement issue, perhaps because of its confusing status as a government of left and right-wing politicans and because of its preoccupation with the after-effects of the Lebanese war and the ailing Israeli economy.

The latest land scandal is seen by many as an embarrassment to the right-wing side of the government. In fact, some say that the timing of its uncovering was planned by the Labour politicians in order to discredit their Likud foes at a time when new elections are predicted. According to Israeli settlement expert Meron Benvenisti, the discovery of the scandal may push Labour politicians to apply stricter regulations over land transactions on the West Bank but will not stop them. "The situation is almost irreversible," he said.

Benvenisti predicted that several of those convicted of involvement in illegal land transactions will be reprimanded, but no top government officials, he said. "The Likud government is to blame for the ordeal. Once they allowed private Israeli investors to deal in West Bank land, they opened the door to criminals and thieves to go about freely. They knew that West Bank residents are vulnerable to roguery. They should have foreseen the danger," he said.

"The Likud government, in fact, made these criminals feel that acquiring West Bank land is redeeming holy land, thus law and order were only secondary. These Likud members will still say that the land should be redeemed regardless of methods used and will get away with it," Benvenisti said.

As for West Bank landowners, Nablus advocate Hussam Fatouh advises that they hurry and register what land they have left. "The landowner should collect all legal documents, surveys and purchase receipts and keep them in a safe place in preparation for future battles" he said, adding, "He should not sign anything except in an advocate's office, and he should report to his attorney any suspicious moves concerning his property."

Landowners are waking up to the dangers says deposed Anabta Mayor Wahid al-Hamdallah. They are organising in the face of settler threats. They have established committees for defence of their lands and will do what is possible to conserve them. It is doubtful, however, that they can resist such sophisticated thefts without international aid. They are standing against a powerful government, military and police conspiracy to deprive them of their main source of livelihood. ■

Palestinians living under Israeli occupation often suffer en masse when the villages, refugee camps or cities they live in are placed under curfew. This week two major cities in the West Bank were placed under curfew for four consecutive days. Al Fajr has not yet been able to get a picture of the situation in Tulkarm and Jenin during the curfew. But a special correspondent for Al Fajr, who was in Nablus during the first minutes of the curfew August 8 and who returned to the city shortly after it was lifted four days later, wrote this report.

An Israeli soldier ordering a Tulkarm resident to go a certain direction during the two-hour break in the four-day curfew./AFP photo

Life Under Curfew

By Nawaf al Aidy

At 2:30 pm on August 8 the car I was in pulled into eastern Nablus. As we moved closer to the centre of the city we saw people running in all directions with fear and horror in their faces. I stepped out of the car to inquire what was going on. But everyone was too frantic to take the time to answer. The best I could gather was that a curfew was imposed on Nablus and the two Palestinian camps that surround it, Askar and Balata. I was able to find out that a Jewish settler was killed.

While I was still trying to ascertain what was happening, an Israeli armoured car approached, shooting live ammunition in all directions. The armoured car was followed by a police car announcing the imposition of the curfew over a loudspeaker. By this time almost all the commercial movement in the centre of the city had come to a halt. People who live in the city tried to get home by foot, while people from outside Nablus were frantically looking for any car travelling in their direction.

Nablus residents who happened to be outside the city had more difficult problems. Mohammed al-Masri was at his job in an Israeli factory when he heard over the radio that Nablus was under curfew. As soon as he heard the news al-Masri stopped working and travelled to Nablus. When he reached the outskirts of the city he was turned back by Israeli soldiers. The soldiers told him point-blank: Nobody comes in or leaves. But Mohammed couldn't simply give up. He knew that his wife and children would be worrying about him. So he went to the nearby mountains and scaled them in order to bypass the soldiers. After he made it past the initial group of soldiers Mohammed had to travel from house to house until he finally reached his own home by 11:00 pm. His eldest son was perched on the rooftop, looking in all four directions for his father and competing to be the first to transfer the news to the anxious family. When he entered his home, al-Masri was hugged by the entire family as they plied him with questions: How did you arrive? Did the Israeli soldiers see you? Did they shoot at you? Are you hungry? Thirsty?

No IDs

Al-Masri's case is one in thousands of similar stories. Four university students who live in Nablus related other problems. "We live in a building in the centre of town called Addaneh building," said Hussein Ibrahim, one of the four Najah University students. "Soon after the curfew was declared soldiers entered the building and confiscated our ID cards. During the four curfew days we couldn't go anywhere, even during the one-hour daily break in which people are allowed to buy food." The students' neighbours, however, knew of their problems and, despite the difficulties and the risks involved, smuggled them three meals a day. Midway through the four-day curfew mothers of three of the four students managed to arrive at their dormitory apartment, considerably alleviating their predicament.

Another resident who spent the curfew with university students is Ahmad Hassan. Hassan, whose livelihood consists of sewing sacks, couldn't get from his tiny shop in Nablus to his home in the Askar refugee camp. Instead Hassan's shop became sleeping quarters for himself and a number of stranded Najah University students. Throughout the curfew the students and the shopowners had to kill time with small talk. "But the subject most discussed was the political situation," said Hassan. "We covered the economic and political situation we are living in under occupation," he said. As soon as the curfew was lifted Hassan went to see his family in the refugee camp. They received him in an emotional embrace. They had assumed he was lost or injured, because rumours had circulated that many fleeing residents had been injured and killed. Hassan's family had tried to inquire through soldiers and even to travel to the city to find out about his condition, but were prevented from doing so.

Family Problems

At home Hassan learned that in his absence there was trouble on the home front. Fights between his children had taken place throughout the four day incarceration. Tension was high and nerves on edge as the children were cooped up in a tiny room. One of his children sported a bandaged brow – the result of a stick fight with his brother.

Um Adnan, a mother of five, had sent her youngest child, a one-year-old baby, to his grandmother's house in the old city of Nablus and had returned home to do some cooking when she heard the sound of the army jeep announcing the curfew accompanied by gunfire. Um Adnan left everything and tried to get to her baby. But she was quickly stopped by soldiers who shot above her head in order to prove that they meant business. The second day of the curfew, Um Adnan couldn't take it any longer and decided to risk everything in order to be reunited with her baby. Edging her way from alley to alley at the risk of being shot, Um Adnan reached her mother's home where she found her baby had been crying the entire two days she was away. Her mother explained that during the curfew she was unable to buy milk for the baby and had to feed him with sugar instead of milk.

Birth Pains

Adnan al-Johari is a teacher at the Khadri Tuqan high school. When his wife started going into labour in her last days of pregnancy, al-Johari called his mother, asking her to come and help just in case the baby would be born during the curfew. His mother vowed to come even if she would be shot. When she left her house she was stopped by Israeli soldiers who asked for her ID card and wanted to know her intentions. After she explained, the soldiers asked her to go a roundabout way. It took her three hours to reach her son's home by foot, a distance that normally takes 15 minutes to traverse. Soon after her arrival, the wife's labour pains increased and the family was forced to find a way to go to the nearest hospital. In order to get by the soldiers Adnan carried a white flag while walking to the nearest army centre to request permission. After obtaining the necessary approval, Adnan rushed his wife to the hospital where she gave birth just 20 minutes after their arrival.

Bread Shortage, Garbage Crisis, Financial Losses

In addition to problems during the curfew, Nablus residents reported other problems during the two-hour break in which residents were allowed to stock up on necessities. Assad Nabulsi is a baker. On the second day Nabulsi used the two-hour break in order to bring flour from the warehouse so that he could bake bread. As he was returning from the warehouse with 10 sacks of flour, he was shocked when Israeli soldiers stopped him and forbid him to take his flour any further, even though the two-hour break had not expired. Nabulsi was obliged to leave the pushcart loaded with the 10 sacks near the Khaldiyeh school. "People had to soak dry bread in water to get by," he said.

Throughout the four-day curfew the garbage in the city was not collected. Ali Ahmad, a former Nablus municipal worker, explained that in the past, when the municipality was run by Arabs, garbage was collected even during curfew. "We were sent out during the two-hour break in order to collect as much garbage as possible," Ahmad said. "The mayor used to negotiate with the Israelis and get permission to bring in heavy equipment, but now with an Israeli mayor no one cares and the garbage has piled up."

In addition to the human suffering experienced by all the residents, curfews mean a great financial loss. With shops closed and employees, many of whom work in Israel as day labourers, unable to travel to their jobs, tens of thousands of dinars were lost in the four-day curfew in Nablus. The largest West Bank city after Jerusalem, Nablus is the heart of the commercial and business life in the northern sector of the West Bank.

Financial loss is most devastating to small shop owners and businessmen. One such case is the story of the Mahmoud Ibrahim, a fruit peddlar who has a mobile cart in the centre of town. When he heard the curfew announcement mixed with the sound of gunfire, Ibrahim joined the others running in the street; he left his cart full of apples unattended. "I thought a dangerous thing had happened and I ran for my life," he said. "I was also anxious to see my wife and six children to make sure they were safe." As soon as the two-hour break was announced the following day, Ibrahim rushed to the centre of the city to recover his cart. But when he arrived he found neither his cart nor his apples; all was gone. "I will buy another cart and return to my work," Ibrahim said with sorrow in his eyes.

Curfew stories abound. Every quarter, every street has its own set of tragedies. In each house you have heroes who dared to break through the curfew to help a family or a friend or to buy a carton of milk and a loaf of bread. And the villains in Nablus are well-known to everyone; no one disagrees about that.